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ALDORNERE,
AND TWO OTHER
PENNSYLVANIAN IDYLLS;
TOGETHER WITH
MINOR POEMS.

By HOWARD WORCESTER GILBERT.

Νομίζοντες ἀθάνατον ψυχὴν καὶ δυνατὴν πάντα μὲν κακὰ ἀνέχεσθαι,
πάντα δὲ ἀγαθά.—PLATO.



PHILADELPHIA:

1890.



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PREFACE.

Of the three idylls in this volume, and which constitute a sort of idyllic trilogy, *Aldornere*, the first, which was dedicated to Sydney Howard Gay, Esq., was published anonymously, in 1872, by John Pennington & Son, of this city, and illustrated with nine original etchings of uncommon excellence, by Mr. Lloyd Mifflin. This idyll was received by the few literary critics to whom it was sent by the author, with greater favour than he could have anticipated. Among them were the late Dr. Mackenzie, of this city, and the late George Ripley, Esq., of the New-York Tribune. The remaining two idylls, now given to the public for the first time, have long lain in manuscript, in an unfinished condition.

The fugitive pieces which follow are selected from among a large number of others which were printed at different periods, and under various circumstances, many of them in early boyhood, and for which the author could desire even a more speedy oblivion than the partiality of his personal friends would accord to them. Premature publication is the fault of ambitious youthful writers; and in this age of abounding literary production, but little judgment is required to see that a large exercise of the right of suppression is the dictate of good sense. All of the poems contained in the present volume have been subjected to a careful revision, a few alterations have been made, and the whole freed from the innumerable blunders of the printer, who is constantly found lying in ambush, in the most unexpected places, ready to slay the spirit with the letter. Several poetical licences have been discarded; but two or three have been retained. The fugitive pieces were all originally published either in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, under the management of Mr. Gay; *The Pennsylvania Freeman*; Mr. Conway's *Dial*; or *The Liberty Bell*, or *The Index*, of Boston.

If the reader should observe any incongruity of a theological character in the volume, he may account for it on the ground of a gradual change of views in the mind of the author.

The indignant tone of several passages in different poems of the collection will need no apology to those readers who have any knowledge

of the depth of degradation to which the political and ecclesiastical demagogues of the North had sunk before the breaking out of the Slaveholder's Rebellion, and which had led a distinguished politician, afterwards Secretary of State, to declare that if it went much further he would make up his pack, and seek liberty in some foreign country.

PHILADELPHIA, 8th January, 1885.

P. S.—The author had hoped that the previous edition of the poems would be free from all typographical errors. But his hopes were frustrated by the diabolical ingenuity of the printer, which goes far toward justifying the monkish conception of the origin of his art. One is always thankful when he makes nothing worse than nonsense of what one has written.

PHILADELPHIA, 1st January, 1890.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The filial editor of a recent selection from the writings of a very fine American author, says, in his preface, that he hesitated for a long time whether he should republish the works he had selected, as the prevalent taste in literature demanded so much of the emotional and passionate, (qualities which were far from conspicuous in the writings selected,) that he doubted whether they would be acceptable to the public. But, as has been frequently observed, the most profound and lasting feelings are not the most violent, any more than the most tumultuous streams are the deepest.

The word poetry, like thousands of others, is often uttered by both the learned and unlearned, without a suspicion that they are talking about what they would find themselves greatly embarrassed to define; and most people would be quite surprised if any one should demand such a definition, tacitly assuming that the meaning of the word is so obvious as to render all definition superfluous.

With the majority, rhyme more or less correct, and with many, metre, or something resembling it, are requisite elements of what they term poetry; and, with a very large class, nothing, or at least very little more than these is regarded as necessary. A metrical jingle, more or less musical, if not absolutely destitute of sense, is sufficient. True, discriminating appreciation of poetry is quite as rare as delight in the finest music or the highest art.

An anonymous writer in one of the great British reviews once said that the two principal sources of poetry are beauty and sorrow. This dictum will, upon careful examination, be found correct; at least it will be felt to be so by all but those who are fond of philosophical disquisitions in metre, and of that literary anatomy which has become so common in this century, or of the metrical delineation of revolting horrors.

The anatomical dissection of every spiritual nerve, vein, and artery, however skillful, is not productive of poetry, any more than the botanical analysis of a flower awakens a sense of beauty. The spiritual analysis is as necessary for the attainment of accurate critical knowledge as the

dissection of the flower; but in both cases the symmetry of the object dissected is destroyed. A few clear, skillful strokes of the true artist give the essentials of a portrait, the impression of unity—of character.

Under the term beauty is, of course, comprised not only all intellectual and moral, but also, all natural beauty; and the theatre on which any drama is displayed is by no means a matter of indifference. The increasing love of the infinite beauties of nature is especially characteristic of this century, and cannot exercise any other than a healthy and elevating influence.

The spectacle of a noble nature steadily maintaining its own distinct personality and independence in the midst of successful fraud and corruption, and cowardly acquiescence therein, is surely the grandest earthly object for human contemplation. But, like the finest picture, the most beautiful group in marble, the most magnificent symphony, or the noblest poem, it will be fully appreciated by but few, since the world in the main, has not yet attained to very clear conceptions concerning truth and justice.

The true artist, therefore, in whatever field he may labour, hopes for the appreciation only of the select few, whose verdict will prove final, just as the original discoverer in the scientific field addresses himself to the small number alone who are able to estimate the value of his discoveries and the accuracy of his demonstrations. He whose pecuniary necessities force him to work for the general public, and, therefore, to descend from this higher ground, does so reluctantly, and with a necessary deterioration in the quality of his work. Everything that causes any restraint of that freedom of expression which is the necessity of true inspiration, limits the field of his genius and cramps his powers. When perfect freedom of utterance on moral questions is hindered, literature dwindles into mere æsthetic imbecility, without nerve or vigour.

Many critics seem to regard distance and obscurity in the history of a life as furnishing the necessary halo of romance for a poem; but he who possesses the deeper insight knows that contemporaneous events have all the charm of those of the far-off past, which differ from them only in being less vivid.

“The poetry of earth is never dead.”

PHILADELPHIA, 1st January, 1890.

PRELUDE.

Untouched, yet sweetly strung, the silent lute
Will echo when the skillful master's hand
Sweeps other, kindred chords,—no longer mute
It answers to the lays of every land.

The bard, too, will all kindred souls allure,
If with a skillful hand he touch the strings,
He knows the everlasting laws are sure
In this, as in all universal things.

But even if within a kindred heart,
His touch might never wake an answering chord,
Still the great choral music is his part,
Eternal beauty is his rich reward.

The winding Susquehanna's shores and isles,
Her flower-white deeps that scent the summer-wind,
Here lie, where shadows float or sunlight smiles,
Haunted by beings of the poet's mind.

Perchance some kindred soul with beauty fraught,
Who wanders gladly nature's scenes among,
May think again these thoughts that he has thought,
And sing again these songs that he has sung.

He thus, perchance, may mingle still, in soul,
With them who here may live life's pleasant day,
After the passing bell his dirge shall toll
And from these scenes he long has passed away.

ALDORNERE.¹

'Twas autumn in the woods of Aldornere,
The chestnut-burs were bursting in the sun,
With their rich wealth of fruitage ripe and brown
That crackled down all day from bough to bough,
Where gathered restless troops of noisy crows



On the warm southern slopes that else were still.
The squirrel there was busy all day long
Hoarding his store deep in the hollow bole,
Down in the silence of those autumn woods.

But, though scarce other sound of life was heard,
Save now and then the cawing of the crows,
Faint-heard and distant, all the woods were filled

With a continual voice in under-tone,
Of the great stream that through the dreamy haze
Of softest blue which veiled the crimsoned hills
And isles, together fading faint and far,
Went winding, shimmering on forever down—
Here dim, there flashing in a mellow gold—
At last to mingle with the distant sea,
Far by the wandering waves and shifting sands.

And where amid those forests gnarled and old,
Like to some mighty Sachem of the Woods,
With muffled voice the Susquehanna met
In council all his many sagamores,
'Mid winding ways, upon its sunny knoll,
There stood the ancient Grange of Aldornere.

The moss of many a year was undisturbed
Upon the stained walls of Aldornere,
And now the many-coloured autumn leaves
Lay thickly strewn in all the woodland-ways.
There was the warbler busy all day long
Among the bowery deeps of shadowy elms
Slow fading into autumn's paly gold,
And his continual ditty on the ear
Fell like the silver voice of woodland stream.

And in this quiet refuge dwelt, apart
From the vain tumult of the envious crowd
And all the frivolous world's most empty noise,
In sable velvet robed—her widow's weeds,—
The Lady of the House of Aldornere.
Two children, only, graced her simple halls,
A daughter fair as morn, with golden hair,
Scarce brighter than the locks of twilight-brown,
Of her young brother ;—they together grew

In that sweet woodland-home in sylvan grace,
As two fair trees whose beauty daily sends
To the gladdened heart of the rude forester
A thrill of joy. And quiet, health and peace
Dwelt in the olden halls of Aldornere.

The dreamy afternoon had lapsed away
In golden stillness, and the sun had set.
But from the snowy mountains of the air
That lay, with changeful and slow-fading forms,
In rosy glory where the day had past,
The light fell on the broad and sleeping stream
Where, on a yellow curve of sanded shore,
Sat Edith Brandon by her brother's side.
And silently they gazed upon the stream
That shone with tints ethereal, tenderer far
Than any hues that glow amid the sky,—
Now every wavelet crinkling in a line
Of clear vermillion—then of steely gray,
Or delicate green—then flushed with tender rose—
Then the long lines upon the unbroken swells,
Fading into the watery tints that told
Of coming twilight.

“If my destiny,”
She said, “should call me from this quiet shore,
It seems to me the murmur of this stream
Would sound forever in my ears—I deem
That like the Switzer, exiled from his home,
I should die pining for my native land.
Its voice, dear George, would haunt me in my dreams,
In whatsoever land my lot were cast.”

And he, “This voice is now, forevermore,
Part of my inmost being. As I mused

In such an evening-hour as this alone,
The voice we hear was moulded into words—
This was the song the river sang to me :

‘ My current made of many streams,
From wells unknown and dark that flow,
I come as from a land of dreams,
And to the glimmering ocean go,—

‘ My song one grand accord of all
The songs of mountain-stream and mere,
And bubbling beck and waterfall,
And meadow-brooklet cold and clear.

‘ By many an isle with plume of green,
By many a mountain still and grand,
By deeps with water-lilies sheen,
And boulder in the beaten sand,

‘ By sunnier dale and shadowy dell,
By dingle deep and cliff of gray,
And hamlet with its sounding bell—
By many a thoughtless wight away,

‘ With olden and deep-hidden lore,
I come from those mysterious springs,—
To thee, upon this solemn shore,
I sing of deep, mysterious things.

‘ To him who hears aright the tunes
Of murmuring waters, wandering winds,—
To him who reads aright the runes
That carvèd in the rocks he finds,

To him, with voice profound and clear,
I tell my tale of boundless range ;
To him who hath an ear to hear
I roun a weird of endless change.

‘And whether he who stands by me
Can rede or not my murmuring,
I sing not less, and wandering free,
And wandering free, forever sing.’”

His voice was hushed, but still the deeper strain
Went murmuring on, while in a dream the two
Still mused as if it were on Lethe's shore,
While river, hill and isle were fading fast,
And then, at last, the nearer boulder dim,
And saw the great gray heron, spirit-like,
Silently flitting on to some lone haunt
Far through the twilight vague that veiled the stream,
When 'mid their trance the clattering of hoofs
Upon the stones and pebbles of the strand,
Aroused them from their reverie. They turned,
And, on his liard, leaning toward them, saw
The form of Alfred Wyndham. “Do I dream?—
Or else what blessed spirits do I see
On the forgetful shore of Lethe stream,
That linger yet, and still the draught delay,
That takes away all memory of the past?”

“We are but mortals of the work-day world,”
She said, “and if my ear deceive me not,
And horse and rider are not phantoms both,
Seen only in the twilight shadows dim,—
I bid you to the accustomed annual feast—
The Banquet of the Fruits amid the woods,
Which, as you know, we hold at Aldornere.
Rustic it is, but plenteous,—of the fruits
Of forest and of field,—and, on the lawn,
Toward the close of day, the evening dance.
I bid you to the feast—'tis the behest,
The Lady of the House of Aldornere

Has given. Come, George, the shades are deepening fast,
We must return." And, with obeisance low,
She vanished in the shadows of the shore.

Screened by the maple's deep-stained foliage
From the mild lustre of the autumn sun,
The rustic board was spread. Great melons there
Lay cloven deep through the rich, crimson core,
Pictured with garlands of their ebon seeds ;
Others of luscious amber, that diffused
A delicate fragrance as of orient musk—
The peach with downy rind of palest gold,
Sprinkled with carmine—from the heavy vines,
Grapes that had drawn rich ripeness from the sun—
Plums of a deeper purple, gathered near,
And some from trees unpruned, in woodland-glades,
Their golden drops, sun-crimsoned with rich stains,
And violet with an amethystine bloom,
And apples bursting with their ripeness piled
In fragrant heaps—their vermeil and pale green,
Had the ripe tints of the autumnal leaves—
And the brown nuts, fresh gathered from the burs,
Poured round, added their woodland-wealth to all ;
While cooling draughts from goblets as of gems,
Drawn from yet other fruits, of other climes,
And ripened under stranger suns, as though
The overflowing fruitage of the land
Were not enough to fill the banquet-board,
And dainties rare, made by the most delicate hands
Filled up the feast which, at the gray old Grange,
Was yearly spread for all the country round.

The myriad ghost-like shadows in the woods,
Behind the barked boles of mossèd trees,

Were hiding from the prying sun away,
Far in the middle of the afternoon,
When, on the checkered sward of forest-turf,
Dappled with golden flecks of mellow sun,
The dance began. The gazer might have deemed
'Twas Dian, with her nymphs, where, through the wood,—
The silver arrow in her golden hair—
Went Edith Brandon with her stately tread,
To the rich mingled sound of chord and horn.
And thus, amid alternate dance and song,
Through deepening twilight, rose far in the east,
The amber moon, and poured her mellow beams
Upon those woodland groups, that, scattered now,
'Neath the low-spreading trees, had pleasant tales
Of bygone days and of the annual feast.

But few had missed the queen of dance and song,
Who, summoned to the Grange, had now returned,
When to a group beneath the beechen shade,
She said, "The lady of the house commands
That Alfred Wyndham, Henry Fairfield come
Into her presence in the hall. She has
Behests to give which do concern them both ;—
Forthwith I will conduct them to the Grange."

They rose and followed. When the stately dame
Had greeted them with friendly words, she said,
"I lay a task upon you not befits
The day of banqueting ; but well you know
Obedience to duty is more sweet
Than any other pleasure of our life.
It makes immortal him who lays his life
Upon the altar, and ennobles e'en
The smaller social charities. Yet full well
I know that what I ask, to many were
No pleasant duty. But no more delay.

“Under the shelter of the friendly night
Five dusky thralls from far Virginian fields,
Led stealthily, and by a faithful guide,
From their last place of refuge in their flight
Have reached this mansion, now, as heretofore,
A shelter for distress. The bridge above,
Beleaguered by the minions of the law,
Affords a passage to their hunters, none
To them. Unless they are to fall a prey
To those who have despoiled them from their birth,
They must in secret here be ferried o’er.
My only son is young, and with the oar
Is so unskilled, that in this difficult spot
I dare not trust these exiles to his charge.
You have the stronger arm and finer skill,—
A boat is lying in the cove below
Chained to the rock,—I pray you, therefore, now
To ferry them across below the isle,
Where friends are doubtless waiting them e’en now,
To guide them farther on their perilous way.”

Then Edith Brandon, with beseeching voice,
“These are the poor, indeed. They have rehearsed,
In their rude, broken language, hastily,
The many fearful dangers they have passed
In forest and by flood. If none there were
To ferry them across, myself would take
The oar and brave the dangers of the stream.”

Then Henry Fairfield murmured forth some words,
Quite indistinct and vague, yet understood
By those who heard them only all too well,
Words which they all had heard oftentimes before,
About the constitution and the laws,
And of the pains awaiting those who broke

The statutes by our senate lately made.
He would be glad, he said, to do the hest
The Lady of the House of Aldornere
Had laid upon him, but the vested rights
Of friends in states where slavery was a part
And parcel of their life, and his regard
For comity and order, quite forbade
That he should aid in violations such
As this of the great fundamental law
Framed by the founders of the Commonweal.
Yet would he not betray the trust reposed,
But faithfully the secret keep. He ceased.

Till now had Alfred Wyndham sat unmoved,
And stern and steady beamed his eye of blue,
As to the Lady of the Grange he turned
And quiet said, "You may rely on me."

Then rose the dame and said, "I will conduct
You straightway to your charge. The rest, at once,
Will to the banquet in the woods return,
Lest any one perchance should make surmise
Of what has here befallen." She led the way.
And soon the plashing sound of dripping oars
Was heard anear the shore, then died away
And all was still. Ere long the banqueters
Dispersed, and each one went his separate way.

And now again the sound of distant oars
Was heard above the murmur of the stream,
Then all was still, and then the measured stroke,
And flash where in the white moonlight the waves
Crinkled in silver; now within the cove,
The grating of the keel upon the sand;
Then, through the woodland way, the steady step

Of Alfred Wyndham ; and an eager group
Received him in the twilight shadows deep
In the great hall. There, till the midnight hour
Had slowly tolled from the far Grainthorpe towers,
They sat conversing of the sad event
Which had befallen, and the gloomy times
That overhung the country like a cloud
Heavy with storm.

The Lady of the Grange
Spoke grandly of the meanness of the lives
That statesmen, as she said they called themselves,
Were leading,—fostering among the mob,
Hatred of race, envy and malice,—all
The grovelling passions, those which most degrade
The soul, and drag it down to deeper deeps
Of spiritual darkness, and how all
The tender charities which ennoble all,
Even the poor, who, when they give their mite,
Hard-earned, and saved through self-denial, rise
To nobler heights than any of the rich—
The rich who, of their great abundance give
Abundantly—and richly are repaid
By the great boon of self-forgetfulness,
Oblivion of the petty miseries
Which make our daily lives so poor and mean,—
How charities like these were scorned and held
In great derision—they who practiced them
By priest and politician openly
Held up to public hate. On such a land
Must come some direful fate, for that the laws
Of compensation were forever sure,
And all great wrongs are balanced in the end.

Long Alfred Wyndham listened to her words,
Then said, “ The wretched land is overrun

With paltry tricksters—statesmen, as you say,
They call themselves—but they are nothing more
Than tricksters, for, between the men who mould
The fortunes of the state and such as these
Who lead a grovelling life from day to day,
By means of the base tricks of their base tribe,
Now pandering to a faction, fostering now,
Hatred between the nations—enemies
They are of the whole human race—between
The statesmen and these men, the difference
Is this: The statesman, with large mind, foresees
The possible evil and the possible good,
And with a generous heart he fosters this,
Represses that. But sympathizing quite
With the great herd, the politician seeks
To gain his ends through small expedients,
And often in a net-work which himself
Has woven, but which his unskillful hands
Cannot unravel—though his cunning wrought—
In his own toils is taken and o'erwhelmed,
And sinks in utter ruin and deserved.
He leads the herd and compasses what they
Forever call success. But scarcely has
The grave closed over him ere they are caught
By other empty names and empty cries,
And he is quite forgotten from the world.

“A dark and ominous shadow seems to me
To rest above the land, and daily more
And more I feel the dim presentiment
Of coming ill. What form that ill may take
I know not, but I feel that it must come.
As smaller eddies, in November days,
Foretell the tempest, so our petty feuds
A mightier conflict, on a wider field.”

Then Edith Brandon, earnestly, "The way
Is plain ; for when the many go astray
Corrupted by injustice, 'tis for them
Who see the right, to follow in the path
And list obediently the call august
Of holy Duty, labouring quietly,
Heralds of that great time when nobler men
And women shall have made these glorious shores
More beautiful by lovely deeds. He strives
In vain who hopes to make his single voice
Heard 'mid the clamour of this crowd. 'Tis now
As it has always been. Truth will be loved
For her own sake—therefore she makes it pain
To serve her, even to the falling off
Of friends. But the brave heart will never quail.
I know a maiden young and delicate,
Poor, but with manners might have graced a court,—
Who with her needle earns her daily bread,—
And whose grand bravery, in these paltering times,
Has daily made me feel how small and poor
The sacrifices are which I have made."

And then their guest, "In years that now are gone,
I sat upon the mossy corner-stone
Of a ruined stronghold in an Alpine glen,
Where scarce the sunlight entered at high noon.
There had the Austrian, in the times gone by,
Forged, for the Switzer, fetters. There remains
Of all his stronghold but the corner-stone ;
And of his history who there lorded it
Over his fellows, little but the tale
Of his great tyranny and its great fall.
This is the story which the ages tell,
But seem to tell in vain. Man will not learn,
And thus the history of the mighty world,

Though oft repeated, seems but little more
Than one great record, written in tears and blood,
Of fearful lessons given and laughed to scorn.

“And ’tis not they alone are blameworthy
Who indiscriminately laud the past,
But also they who thoughtlessly condemn
That past, made bright by many glorious deeds
And glorious lives—while undervaluing them,—
And shadowing a radiance given to light
Us unto generous action, and diffuse
Its warmth through cold and calculating minds
That need such life as nerved the noble hearts
Who with sad-eyed Riégo strove and failed,
And with our fearless Hampden fought and fell.”

Pondering these words, on a still autumn day,
The youthful haunter of those quiet woods
Wandered adown through calm October meads,
’Mid fallen and falling leaves, with thoughtful tread,
And following in its course the brook, he reached,
At last, the greater stream, and seating him
Where the continual waters flowed away
By rock, and boulder, and the beaten sand,
In everlasting change, he heard again,
The stream, far winding to the moaning sea ;
And there, alone, he sang this simple lay,—
A prelude to the sorrows which befell.

“On Grainthorpe meads of tender green
The autumn sun beams mild and still,
And the field-sparrow, in its sheen,
Runs o’er his ditty sad and shrill.

“Wild singer, e’en at early morn,
And till the day to night must yield,
I hear thee on thy lonely thorn,
Within the solitary field.

“And when these fields are pale and sere,
And thou to other climes art flown,
Thy song still ringeth in my ear,
Subdued, and in an under-tone.

“Oh! why along this changeful shore,
Where hurrying waves are murmuring,
Why is it that forevermore
I hear, or seem to hear thee sing?

“So sad, yet sweet, and all serene,
That piercing voice still seems to say,—
The burden of its simple threne,—
‘The beautiful has passed away.’

“Therefore it is that e’en unheard,
Thy mournful song seems echoing still,
Therefore forever, warbling bird,
I hear thee trill thy ditty shrill.”

The snow lay deep upon a hundred hills
And choked the hollows of the woodland-dells.
Under the ice the streams flowed noiselessly
And all the forest-trees were stark and bare.
The gaunt gray wolves, among their mountain-holds,
Grew fierce with famine, and the snowy owl,
Swept from his northern wastes by mighty storms,
Sought for his prey around the homes of men.
At silent midnight, from the unwonted pole,
Dawned a peculiar morning, wider-spread
Than the auroral flushes of the east,
And through its glowing crimson, golden rays
Streamed to the zenith, where the augmented stars
Glittered in steely splendour—the white robe
Of earth was reddened with the ethereal dye.
In nights such as that dreary winter knew,
Were told in Saxon forests, mossed and old,

Tales of the were-wolf by the yule-fire red,
While the wild storm whirled the white-gathering snows
Into the thickening darkness far away.

Thus passed the dreary winter o'er a land
Clouded with dread anticipations long,
And after many a weary day, at last,
Fled at the coming of the genial spring—
The spring that melts away the wide-spread snows,
Into tumultuous and rejoicing streams,
When on the ominous stillness sudden boomed
One cannon on a far and southern shore,
And civil war began. O'er all the land
Was heard the hurrying tramp of myriad men,
Suddenly called from anvil and from plough
And from the quiet student's voiceless room,
To mingle in the fierce and deadly fray
And fall into unknown and nameless graves.

But not the less, serene and undisturbed,
As if no mighty ruin had been wrought,
The delicate influence of the tender spring
Ran through all nature, pulsed through every vein,
And filled the woods and fields with peace and joy.
The brown song-sparrow quickly felt again
Its subtle magic, and straightway began
His half-forgotten warblings and along
The southern borders of the quiet woods,
The early flicker's vernal note was heard,
As in his fitful flights he suddenly
Spread out the golden lining of his wings.
In the bare woods the bloodroot's crimson bulb
Shot up a flower as white as e'er of yore,—
The downy wind-flower showed as deep a blue.
Rich mosses o'er the brown and mouldering bole

Crept many-tinted, with their broidery rare,
And others gemmed the shadowy runnel's side
With clustered stars green as the emerald-stone,
While the arbutus trailing lowly near
Her fragrant and auroral buds and bells
Made pale with greater beauty now once more,
The matchless carpet which they wove anew.

The veil-like verdure of the early spring
Thickened and deepened to the green of May.
The lady's-slipper, in the hidden dell,
Once more her frail and rosy bubble hung,
And lace-like vines the summer decks with bells,
Mantled the towering rocks moss-stained and gray,
While from the clefts the scarlet columbine
Her golden-lined horns hung lower still
Heavy with black wild bees that murmuring
Were gathering honey there the livelong day.

The bowery elms by all the streams once more
Were green and full of shadows, and anear,
The wilding, with its wealth of rosy blooms,
Made fragrant all the still and sunny mead.
Within the peaceful quiet of the field
The birds were busy, hurrying to and fro ;
Alone the thrush, upon his errand bent,
In bebies there the grackles, here—a pair—
The sheeny doves, and in the white-thorn one
Without a name, repaired a ruined nest.

Again the prancing liard pawed the turf
Under the elms that in the twilight loomed
More vast and shadowy, a deeper gloom
Throwing around the Grange of Aldornere.
And in the high, arched doorway stood the form

Of Alfred Wyndham—in the deeper shade
Stood Edith Brandon with her queenly mien,
The silver arrow in her golden hair.

“Our doom,” he said, “is on us, as you know;—
The land is filled with noise of hurrying feet
And blare of bugles. Me, too, has this fate
Drawn into the vast whirlpool, and I go
To-morrow to the battle’s front. I come
To say farewell.” He paused, then said, “In times
Of greatest trial nothing makes so strong
As love. In life there are two twin-delights,
To love and to be loved; but, of the two
To love is greater—from a fountain deep
Of fullness welling evermore, love is
Exhaustless as the unfailing ocean tides,
And as the warmth and radiance of the sun.
I knew a lady lovely as the dawn,
Who moved to melody—her girlish form
Had a peculiar grace, accorded well
With the sweet, lofty beauty of her face.
Her mind was like the golden light that flows
O’er all things in its splendour rich and warm,
And woven of a thousand hues whose beams
Mingled in dazzling beauty. Her I love.”

A sighing wind swept through the twilight deeps
Of verdure, dying like a sigh away.

“And if I knew,” he then began again,
“That your sweet love forever followed me,
My soul would be forevermore at peace.”

Then all was still. “And if,” at last she said,
“I were right worthy of so great a love,

I, too, could bear the burden greater still
Than all that in this life I yet have borne,
Of such a parting, on a day like this."

He spoke no more, but on her lips he pressed
A kiss so tender that no time thereof
Could ever take the memory away,
Then in the shadow vanished, like a thing
That has been, but is not forevermore.

Upon the heart of him who now was left
Without his friend, there fell a gloom so deep
That scarce disaster could have made it more ;
And in the woods of Aldornere he found
A solitude befitting his sad mood.
Far in those depths there is a woodland stream
That wells from springs within the silent hills.
Here, o'er its ledge, a tiny waterfall,
Pouring into its basin in the rock,
There sleeping quietly, a fairy mere,
On snowy pebbles set in golden sand.
Here, by a murmuring fall he dreamed by hours
Gazing upon the water as it fell
Into its cup of moss all emerald-green,
Limpid and calm in its continual flow ;
With line of liquid silver here, and there,
Where the sun fell, a spot of blazing gold.
Anear, amid the quiet woods, the thrush,
Sweet greenwood-fluter, all day long was heard,
In the still shadows of his beechen tree,
Not wotting of the ruin of the times.

It could not last ; and though so young in years,
After a direful battle where the Wrong
Was victor, then he plunged into the fray

With many of his comrades, firm resolved
Boldly to do for freedom, or to die.

Amid such changes years had passed away,
And a great domineering Tyranny
Yielded, reluctant, to its fate at last,
No more to ply the scourge with cruel hand,
No more to mould the conscience of the State,
To menace all the nations now no more.

The leaves fell brown and dead upon the streams
And in the many winding woodland-ways,
And the blue haze again upon the hills
And o'er the sleeping waters spread its veil
All faint and dim, and from the misty deep
Of the great stream was heard the lonely cry
Of the solitary loon that lingered still
Upon its bosom. Through the glimmering air
At noonday came sometimes the snowy swan
With bugle-note, leading his glittering lines—
Their white wings flashing in the golden sun,—
Then, after the great calm, and pulsing slow,
The mighty undulations that foretold
The coming of the storm. The wailful winds
Moaned with their spirit-voices and afar
Swept through the shuddering woods down to the sea.

All nature fell into a quiet deep,
Like that through which we sink into a dream.
From the dim air the bluebird's mournful note
Was faintly heard again, as wearily
He floated on his airy journey far
Southward and sunward, and the cricket's chirp
Came from the long and matted grass that lay
Sere by the hedge-rows where the sparrow's nest,
Deserted now and ruined, lay quite bare.

The clouds were thickening all the weary day
On rock and stream, and now a lowering storm
Hung dark and heavy on the Thornton Hills
That dimly loomed afar, like veiled ghosts ;
And now and then the bells in Grainthorpe towers
Tolled for some soldier, while the long array
Wound silent to the quiet churchyard's rest,
And earth to earth, and dust to dust again
Was duly rendered.—And the rain still fell.

And in the midst there came a messenger,
His mantle dripping with the beating wet,
Who, having doffed his storm-drenched garments, soon
Demanded of the Lady of the Grange
A speedy audience. With few, simple words,
He said he brought sad tidings of her son,
And sadder still of one they long had known,
A friend, the colonel of the regiment.
For a great battle had been fought, he said,
And Alfred Wyndham, bravely leading on
His men, in the fierce onset had, at last,
Fallen to rise no more, and by his side,
Her son, too, wounded with most cruel wounds,
But not, he hoped, to death. He who had brought
These mournful tidings, having known them both,
And loved them for their passing gentleness—
He being a soldier in their regiment,—
Had borne the living from the battle-field,
And cared for him as tenderly as for
A brother, and had left him, when he came
Upon this errand, in most gentle hands.
The slain were many, and no time there was
For more than the most hasty burial
In hasty graves. Himself had closed the eyes
And decently had laid the dead to rest,

But 'mid the maddened flight of hurrying hosts
 And tumult of the battle could no more,
 Nor on the distant field where they had fought,
 Retrace his way, nor find the nameless grave.
 "But this remembrancer from him I bring;"
 The soldier said, with eyes now dimmed with tears.
 "He murmured something with his dying breath,
 About some other shore—I could not catch
 His faint and faltering words."

The stranger drew
 Forth from his vest a trinket rich and rare,
 A case of gold whose tracery fair enclosed
 A living likeness of the lover dead.
 And round about the shell of glittering gold
 Was wound a stained scroll which bore some words
 Whereof the first were washed away with blood.

* * * * *

"Would I could send it with thy wing
 Far through the blue thou wandering dove,
 That seek'st on distant shores the spring,
 To Edith, whom I love.

"But if my weary feet that shore
 With her may never tread again,
 Yet shall my soul forevermore,"

* * * * *

The rest by deadly bolt was torn away
 And stained with blood of a most faithful heart
 Even in death most tender and most true.

Then on the House of Aldornere there fell
 A mighty silence such as ever comes
 Companion of a great calamity ;

And Edith Brandon knew that evermore
A shadow rested on the glorious world,
That henceforth all things sad should sadder be,
And every mournful thing be mournfuller,
And that the light from out her life was gone.

And still another year had passed away.
The Lady of the Grange of Aldornere
Sat in the twilight of her olden halls,
And at her side a stranger, young in years,—
Her form seen in the twilight vague and dim.
The wailing winds told of the vast wreck without,
And turned their minds to wreck of other things.

“ This mighty tempest, with its ruin vast,
Seems to me but a symbol of the storm
Which, sweeping o’er the land, has left it like
An ocean after some dread whirlwind past.
Far, in the midst of tumult, some great bark
We saw was foundering, and, at last, it sunk.
Here, one still firmly weathering all the wild
And merciless beating of the leaden waves,—
There, when the day was spent, some ponderous hulk
Drifting, a wreck, upon the weltering sea.
My house has, also, suffered direful fate,
Such as, perforce, must follow in such times,
And this dear home, the refuge once of peace,
Is left quite desolate. Alfred Wyndham lies
Among his slaughtered fellows, all unknown ;
And George and Edith sweetly, side by side,
Under their mounds of green sleep their calm sleep
In everlasting peace. Yet evermore
These halls are sacred, for their feet have trod
These floors. In this sad, solitary time
'Tis meet that you, the lone and orphaned child

Of my lost brother,—yours a kindred grief,—
Should watch my life's decline. I shall have time
To make my house all ready ere the day
Of the great journey to the unknown land.

“Yet in the midst of this calamity
Which has o’ertaken all my house and left
Me desolate, in such a time, my grief
Perchance were all too great to bear ; but when
I gaze around and see what has befallen
The thousands who must henceforth struggle on,
'Mid sorrows great, with poverty and care,
I feel how ill it even me beseems
To brood o’er private griefs. There is no need
Idly to pine in such a world as this—
The poor and wretched suffer everywhere.
The remnant of my life I shall devote
To deeds of charity.”

She left the tale
Unfinished. In the councils of the state
Stood Henry Fairfield, and, in eloquent words,
Told to a listening senate that his heart
Had always beat for freedom. All believed
Save the superiour few who silently
Had watched his course. The many, as is their wont,
Accepted what not thwarted their own ends,
Applauding loud his empty words ;—his crimes
Against the truth, in hours of greatest need,
They had forgot, or never cared to know.

After long pause resuming, then she said,
“Now sing the requiem George, when dying, dreamed.
He fell into a slumber great and deep,
And slept a sleep so sweet we feared to move

Lest we should wake him from his peaceful rest.
When he awoke he said that he had dreamed
A dirge of peace."

After a prelude, then,
Whose tones were tears, the maiden sang these words:

- "Of thy stream, Amelete, who reaches the shore,
O'er the mountains shall wearily wander no more,
- "But blissfully deeming his sorrows are past,
He shall gladly lie down by thy waters at last.
- "He shall drink of that draught of oblivion deep,
And shall fall, as at evening, serenely to sleep,
- "And for aye, from the regions of light and of day
He shall fade in the land of the shadow away,
- "Like the mist, as it melts in the blue of the sky,
Or the wave that dissolves on the shore with a sigh,
- "Like the dying away of the wind on the wold,
And the ending at evening a tale that is told.
- "And whether the spirit be only a breath
Sleeping, also, at last, in the quiet of death.
- "Or, whether beyond the oblivious stream,
It abandons the land of the shadow and dream,
- "And afar, on the peaceful Elysian plain,
Embraces the friend of its bosom again,
- "Still we know, as they knew,—on that rock we rest sure—
That 'tis better forever to strive and endure.
- "We will lay them to rest with their glorious mien,
And chaunt o'er the mortal, our tenderest threne,—
- "We will weep o'er their beauty, as mortals must weep,
Knowing we, too, shall follow and enter that sleep,

“In the hope that at last, when life’s battles are o’er,
We shall meet them again and be severed no more.”

The voice had ceased, and through the sounding halls
The echo of the organ died away,
And Quiet, with her boon of peaceful rest,
Brooded in shadow over Aldornere.



MARY CRAVEN.²

The April morn was tempting, and we strolled—
The master now of Wyndham and myself—
To Lowthorpe, down among the wooded hills ;
And in the forge, we whiled away an hour,
Gazing with pleasure ever fresh and new



On the brown workmen with their wondrous skill
Kneading the iron which they deftly drew
Forth from the mighty rollers, moulding it
With giant power, in glowing crimson bars
That slowly faded as they cooled. And one
Or two there were among those brawny men
Who, not unread in the marvelous history
They find recorded in the sunless mines,

And in the runic mysteries of the rocks,
Spoke with the certain knowledge that we draw
From nature's records, which will not mislead
The men who, with the eye to see, thereto
Add the calm patience which alone can read
The intricate language, older, infinitely,
Than oldest human tongue,—their speech had all
The native freshness of the man who tells
Not what he gets from books, but what he knows.

Upon our homeward way we passed again
Through the familiar woods of Aldornere,
Revolving pensively the truth that moods
As wide asunder as our separate lives,
As morning is from evening, day from night,
Yet follow, as the shadow does the sun.
We sat us down beneath the beechen tree
Where we had sat full many a time before,
With the lost friends of days forever gone.
The place was haunted with the shadowy past ;
There were familiar voices in the halls—
There were strange shadows on the winding stair ;
But still the pewit, as in other years,
Was swinging careless on the delicate spray,
Whose bursting buds showed the first early green
Of April, uttering his pleasant note
Like rain-drops falling into water. Near
The bloodroot sunned its snowy buds with cups
Of palest green 'mid the damp woodland-leaves—
The fallen foliage of a bygone year.

At Aldornere the grass is green,
The woods are budding too, at last,
As in the vernal days serene
Of years that are forever past.

But from the splendour of the light
That shone of yore at Aldornere,
A something sweet has vanished quite,
And left behind the silent tear,

O'er all the wood and widening lea,
Has passed a still and nameless change—
Here, in this spreading beechen tree,
There, in the gray and altered Grange.

And from the many-windowed hall,
And from the shadowy, open door,
And from the whispering elms—from all—
I hear the murmur, "Nevermore !"

And as I pass these scenes where rang
The songs in which I bore a part,
A sudden and a stifling pang
Seizes, with iron hand, my heart.

The song of home—on alien strand—
The highland peasant's lay that sings,
Of seas that sunder land from land,
With their mysterious murmurings,

These tell, with low and pensive tone,
That only change and death are sure,
And in the heart they leave alone
A sorrow quite without a cure.

"Twas there that Edgar Wyndham told this tale :

"That memorable night can never be
Forgotten while life lasts. We gathered there
In the grand Temple of the Muses, reared
In the fair city by the Delaware,
Which, in an age gone by, the Founder planned
For a green country town, and named its ways

With pleasant woodland-names that hinted all
Of brown nuts crackling down from bursting burs
In the autumnal days—of bowery vines
Festooned from branches of the oak and elm,—
Of fragrant walnuts twinned upon their sprays,—
Of pines that give a murmur like the sea,
Yet whisper of their distant mountain-haunts,
And of all pleasant forest-sights and sounds—
Of greenwood-vistas, of the waterfall,
Where all the air is filled with rainbows—then
The plashing brook—the spotted thrush that sings
Deep in a glen.

“A gala night it was,
And all was splendour. In the midst there sat,
Grand above all, the Lady of the Grange,
And by her side, with wealth of golden hair
Falling in waves over the Clytie-brow,
Sat Edith Brandon. At the lady's right
Was Mary Craven who had lately come
From over sea. All words were vain to tell
The peerless beauty—of the pure Grecian face,
With cheek of palest rose, the wealth of hair
That crowned the brow and melted into gold
Along the temples—of the queenly mien—
A mien that seemed to hold in lofty scorn
All homage to her beauty. Of that scene,
The shadowed background, as in picture grand,
Showed, in its grouping, men to brave the times—
The Wyndhams, and with many others there
Sat Edgar Mowbray. Something winning, what,
I know not, was there in his bearing,—still
A hint of something fleeting and untrue,
Was in the expression of his changeful face
And in his graceful mien.

“ O'er all were shed
The rainbow-splendours of the crowning light
That hung above, showering its jewels down
Upon the thousands gathered there ; before,
A dreamy scene on an Italian mere,
Bore us, in fancy, into other lands,
As in a vision, leaving the real world
To fade away.

“ Then came the opening tones
Of a great symphony, that seventh hymn
Of the high German master, him who stands
Supreme among the lords of harmony ;
And, on through mazes of his mighty theme,
Swept the grand music with triumphant flow,—
Wandering on, as down through pleasant vales
Forever opening into something fair
And fairer still—dreamy idyllic dales
And glimmering streams with shadowy isles that lured
To linger in Elysium,—then rose
In many-voiced and mighty symphony,
That seemed to tell of meetings sweet of friends,
Of glorious days together passed—and then
Of Sunderings forever. And through all
Again, and yet again, in under-tone,
Was heard one deep and solemn note that seemed
A sound of warning, saying in a voice
Deeper than words, ‘ Beware ! and yet Beware !’

“ But none, I deem, dreamed in that mystic hour,
What web the Fates were weaving ; for the woof
Is wrought by hands unseen, and silently
Is thrown the shuttle in the web of life.

“ And from that day they often welcomed him
At Aldornere. The city's din, he said,

Its noise and conflict, all its passions mean,
Made the fresh country-life so doubly sweet
That when he reached those still and pleasant fields,
And heard again the murmur of the stream,
He longed to leave the toiling, moiling crowd
Behind forever.

“ When the great civil war
Had wrought its ruin, and all had passed away
But the still stately Lady of the Grange,
Was Edgar Mowbray quietly betrothed
To the fair English girl. The marriage was
Of the simple Quaker fashion. A few friends
Witnessed the plighted troth, with neither priest
Nor magistrate. Then, having ranged her house
For her departure, the Lady of the Grange
Passed from this life into the stranger-land
Unto her fathers, and the two were left.

“ And thus a quiet twelvemonth passed away
In uneventful flow, and in the Grange
There reigned a calm that none had ever dreamed
Was herald of the storm. The sun arose
And set with but the common change,—the stars
Beamed in alternate splendour with the day—
Spring followed winter, and the falling leaf
Told in its pensive language that the year
Was passing.

“ But, although no outward change
Was visible in the life of Aldornere,
And though from hour to hour the daily round
Of household duties there was undisturbed,
The life was not the same. A shadow seemed
To dim the sunshine. In the genial warmth

Of vernal days there was a sullen cold,
As of a sky noiselessly overcast
By unseen influence. O'er the woods and fields
There came a change which has no name ; it came
At first like to a shadow faint and dim
Of a summer-cloud the gazer scarcely sees,
Which soon is followed by a deeper shade
That leaves no doubt that 'tis a shadow. Then
Like to some unseen, ghostly presence stood
Between the two, boding some evil thing,
An ominous phantom, vague and undefined,—
The spectre Alienation. The change had come,
But Mary Craven knew not why.

“ At last,
Like to a bird of evil omen, robed
In weeds funereal, there came one night,
A priest, and Edgar Mowbray threw away
The deep disguise. The wily monk that bred
In falseness, had been taught all subtle arts
Of fine insinuation, and had learned
His lesson well, strove, with a steady will
To make his way with delicate flattery,
Rather implied than uttered. In a land
Beyond the sea, and by a brotherhood
That had declared all means are holy, men
Can use for holy ends, from early youth
He had been moulded, and from them had learned
To study with a stealthy cunning, all
The artless movements of the youthful heart,
That he might better lead the mind matured,
Yet rouse not its distrust. A master in
The arts of flattery and intrigue, a monk
Whose head was bowed with years, had given him
The maxim, ‘ Study well the boy, and you
Will understand the man.’

“ And willingly
Had Edgar Mowbray yielded up his soul
Unquestioning and blind to the arrogant
Behest given by that Great Conspiracy
That has no lesser aim than to subdue
The noble mind of man from pole to pole.

“ Thus, like the noiseless bird of dubious night
That hides in shadow all conspiracy,
Flitted the priest and then returned again,
And vanished and returned once more ; but in
What dark and secret haunts he lurked—with whom
Bound in a hidden league, and how he held
Fast in his toils the man whom she had loved—
These mysteries Mary Craven never knew.
Yet her fine spirit, though she stood alone,
Was all undaunted 'mid the mystery ;—
The subtle cunning and the deep intrigue
She could not fathom, since no clue she had,
To thread the mazes ; but she felt o'er all
The shadow of a falsehood, and no art
Nor wearying persistence aught of power
Wielded to mould her high, imperial will.

“ Thus after absence that had been prolonged
In a distant city many weary days,
Came Edgar Mowbray to the silent Grange,
And brought with him the priest in gloomy garb—
Of mediæval fashion. Soon 'twas clear
Why, in the lonely evenings at the Grange,
His talk had been so much of bygone times,
And all their glories—of the solemn aisles
Of dim cathedrals and their gorgeous streams
Of light so many-stained that richly fell
Through the dim twilight on the holy floors

Worn by the tread of sainted feet, and why
He pored for hours on tomes of churchly lore,
And seemed to live but in the shadowy past.

“ Thus, on an ever-memorable day,
The priest with stealthy guile returned again
With smile on face, but treachery in his heart.
After some converse and a brief repast
In the great hall, the master of the Grange
Pleading some business in the hamlet, down
By the riverside, from whence he would return
After short absence of an hour or two,
Departed, and the lady and the priest
Were left alone.

“ After some commonplace—
The splendour of the season and the grand
And glorious shores that made the ancient Grange
A refuge sweet, to which the weary soul
Worn with the struggles of this earthly strife,
Could turn for peace, the priest, with subtle skill
Fell gradual, seemingly without design,
Into the praise of the still calmer life
Of those who had withdrawn them from the world
With all its wearying conflicts, thus to fix
Their hearts in holy meditation on
The things that are not fleeting, but endure
Forever,—and he said that most of all
For woman was this life contemplative
A fitting life, for that her gentle soul
Ill bore encounter with the endless strife
Of evil passions in this sinful world—
And that it was her own peculiar grace
To yield her spirit to the guidance sure
Of those who were, by a divine command,

Ordained to lead her in the only way
That led into the everlasting peace.

“ She listened calmly till his tale was done,
And then replied, ‘ This life is not for me.
Even if all your picture were quite true,
In outline and in colour, this were yet
A poor and barren life. To hide myself
Within the convent-walls,—at stated hours,
To kneel before a crucifix and count
Even golden beads upon my rosary,
Would make my whole existence but a tale
Told by an idiot ; and ’tis not my mood
To add another instance but to show
The mighty genius of the master-bard.’

“ He said, ‘ But many mighty bards have found
Their peace at last within the sacred walls
Of Holy Church. Masters of harmony,
Great limners and immortal geniuses
Whose hands have freed from out the shapeless stone
Those forms divine that have entranced the world
With unimagined beauty,—all have been
The loving and obedient servitors
Of her whose only wish is to embrace
All tribes and races in her loving arms.’

“ ‘ The time,’ she answered, ‘ for your dream is past ;
Her temples and the priceless offerings
Of genius need not perish. They were all
Tributes of the unconquerable mind
She seeks to fetter, so that she may rise
Triumphant o’er its ruin. Ne’er again
Will man repeat this history. He has passed
Through narrow portals from the dusky aisles,

Where gorgeous splendours through the twilight
streamed,
Into that Temple whose grand oriel glows
With the far greater splendours of a dawn
Which is the herald of a mighty day
Full of all joyous light and happy life ! ’

“ ‘ Your house,’ he said, ‘ is built upon the sand.
Your travail and your struggles are in vain.
Vain are all human things—the only true
And lasting thing on earth is Holy Church.
Factions and even nations pass away,—
The Church remains—forever will remain.
Whole peoples who against her power divine
Have risen in rebellion, have returned
And bowed submissive to her sovereign will.’ ”

“ ‘ Her hope is in the hordes ! ’ the lady said,—
‘ I have a higher faith than to believe
The hordes shall rule the world. ’Tis true, I know,
Monarchs of mighty empires are with her
In secret league ; and even in lands like this,
Where princes rule no more, the herd are led
Through envy, malice and all passions base,
By men, co-mates with her in low intrigue,
Yet dream not that this people will be caught
Within your toils, or fettered in your bonds.
You cannot chain the winds nor bind the streams—
How will you rivet on the godlike mind,
Whose great pulsations you can never see,
Your brutal shackles ? Suffering and tears
Your Holy Church has, doubtless, yet in store
For the sad, tired world. Long centuries
Like a dread nightmare she has brooded o’er
The noblest nations—with her sorceries,
Her childish pomp and tinsel, gaudy show,

Prevailed o'er many nations. But her might
In passing, and will fade before the day.'

"The priest, as one astound, awhile was dumb,
Then muttered forth some incoherent words,
To which the lady did not deign reply.

" 'Moreover, it is written,' then she said,
'On the imperishable tablets where
Rome's history is recorded with a pen
Of steel, that all her ways are marked with blood.
As for the rest, I speak not.'

"Angrily,
The priest replied, his prudent wiles forgot,
'He whom your will is plighted to obey,
Summoned me hither to this holy task.
Long since he entered, secretly, the pale
Of the one only Church, and soon will be
Enrolled among her priesthood. She allows
No other union but the marriage she
With holy rites can sanction—she alone.
And yet I am empowered by her to grant
Full absolution for your error great
Though all unwitting, and thus innocent.

" 'A company of sainted sisters, known
For their great purity and piety,
Consent to ope to you the doors of peace.
Your great example will be widely felt,—
Your gold, under the blessings of the Church,
Will swell her sacred charities. He whom
You long have loved would gladly see you thus
Renounce the empty world.'

“ ‘ Insolent priest !’

She instant said, ‘ depart from out these halls,
That ne’er before were tainted by the tread
Of one so base !’ He vanished like a bird
Of evil omen, smitten by the day.

“ Long hours she passed as one who had been stunned
By some great blow. There was no spoken word,
Yet all was clear before her vision—that
Her fate was wrecked. Some quiet days she gave
To thought for her changed future, ordering all
With the calm judgment of a spirit clear.

“ One day there came to the now voiceless Grange
Two exiles from a distant land, who sought
To win their bread with cithern and with song.
With a sweet voice that thrilled the inmost heart.
The woman sang—her fellow exile swept
With skillful hand the strings. This song they sung :

‘ O ! sky of blue and air of balm !
O ! quiet of this golden day !
Would that an everlasting calm
Like this might soothe my pain away !

‘ O native hamlet, far and still,
Where heart with heart could meet and blend,
With mingled song and cithern thrill,
And converse of the faithful friend,—

‘ Those days of peace for me are o’er,—
The despot there his sceptre wields ;—
Thy ways I now shall tread no more,
Nor see again my native fields.’

The exiles ceased. The lady seized her lute
And sang this simple songlet in reply :

‘ The exile though he ne’er again
Embrace the hearts his friendship knew,
Still knows, amid that bitter pain,
Those hearts are ever leal and true.

‘ But is not this the greater need,
When soul from soul is torn apart ?
This is the wreck of life indeed,
The exile of the broken heart !

‘ The lute with tender music made
An idyll once of wood and field ;—
Their splendours with its music fade—
The fountain is forever sealed.’

“ She rose and gave the weary wanderers gold
As one who was their debtor. Though her eyes
Were tearless, there was that within her voice,
Which passed all weeping. As the exiles went
Their eyes were blinded with the falling tears.

“ One night in the great hall at Aldornere
With Edgar Mowbray silent and alone,
She wrought with busy fingers at some work
Of beauty, but her thought was wandering far
To other themes and other lands, while he
Turned over leaf by leaf the yellow page
Of a great tome of monkish lore. At last
He said, ‘ Long have I waited in the hope
That you might see the opening dawn of truth—
Of that great day which shall illumine soon
This land that in the mists of error lies,
And greet, with heart renewed, the triumph sure
Of the great cherishing Mother, Holy Church.
Yet have I hoped in vain. The healing words
Of the holy father of all souls that shall
Inherit bliss, here uttered by the lips

Of his meek servant, who has deigned to come
To this lost house, to save ' ———

“ ‘ Spare me all praise
Of her whom I have fathomed to the depths
Of all her deep and dark duplicity,
So far as her disguise allows. ’Tis she
That moves the spirit,—other, grosser hands
Move the material world ; but this is she
Who is familiar with all various keys
Of passion, avarice and ambition, she
Whose mastery of the instrument is such
She plays them in the dark. She needs nor bridge
Nor highway to the tributary lands
That teem with millions of her thralls. She binds
The ignorant boor who toils for his daily bread
With her weird sorcery, and steals away
The half that he has won, to feed the horde
Of shavelings she has trained to bind his soul,
In that subjection. Like the warrior
That leads his army into friendly lands,
She makes her plunder pay her stealthy war
Against the human soul.’

“ ‘ Hold, hold,’ he said,
Your frantic parsons with their frenzied herds,
Are they not blindly leading, blindly led ?
And they, indeed, in error ; but the Church
Crowned with the crown of high authority
Leads to eternal life.’

“ ‘ Talk not to me,’
She said, ‘ of priest or parson. When I ask
For warrant of your safe authority,
Your words are vague and wandering. It is said

That woman cannot reason—that her part
Is evermore to follow. I had dreamed
That we should tread the paths of lofty thought
Aided and aiding, thus throughout all time.
For though the soul may never reach the Source
Unknown, unfathomable toward which
It strives unceasing, still the glorious light
Forever brightening beams upon our way.
At last, the truth is plain that I must stand
Alone, and you, the man, you who have led
The active life among your fellows, bow
In blind obedience to a shaveling monk
And bid me follow. This I cannot do
But as the hypocrite, and thus it is
Your holy Mother Church intrudes between
And rends our love.'

“ ‘No love was ever true,’
He said, ‘that asks the ruin of a soul.’

“She deigned no answer, but with haughty calm
Resumed the tale unfinished, of the griefs
In which her own great sorrows bore no part.
‘The symbolism of your crimes is drawn
From the great abyss of nature—bats that fly
Only at night, and fearful birds of prey
That hunt amid the darkness—slimy forms
That lurk in sea-depths where the light above
Can never enter, lying there in wait
For those that pass along the abysmal ways,
And seize them with inexorable arms—
Spiders that ever spin invisible webs
In unsuspected places, for their prey,
And lie, themselves, in ambush, till that prey
Inextricably is entangled—fierce,

Remorseless feline forms that roam at night
And snuff their prey afar.'

“ ‘The one true Church
Of right has silenced, and will silence here,
Those siren voices leading men astray
And quench those wandering lights that over marsh
And moor lead ever to his ruin, him
Who fascinated, follows.’

“ ‘In the lands
Ruled by your sable armies, they have spread
Ruin and desolation. Where they reign
Man cannot trust his fellow. Doubt, Distrust
And Dread, the fearful Three, dire as the Fates
The Greek has feigned, were the dread couriers
That told their coming ; ever after them,
There followed Treachery, Torture and Despair.
They loose all evil passions, foster all
The base desires that fill the teeming hearts
Of the most brutal—envy, malice, hate
And murder. Where they pass they leave behind
Whole lands laid waste ; where grew the nourishing grain
Nought to be seen but desolation,—where
The ploughman traced the fertile furrow, nought
But weeds and brambles ; where the hamlet stood
A silent and yet eloquent heap of stones.
Yet dream not that you can extinguish quite
The free and noble soul of man. The dark
And gloomy god they serve with willing heart,
Like to the Brocken Phantom vast and dim,
Is but the image of themselves, which fades
Away, as they shall fade, in floods of light.
Thus, while you ever prate in lowly guise
And feigned voice of your humility

You grasp at sway before whose mighty power
The rule of princes fades abashed away.'

“ She said, and Edgar Mowbray who had learned
His priestly lesson well, replied, ‘ The tale
Your parsons tell—have told a thousand times—
You have repeated all in vain ; yet, if
’Twere true I would not swerve a single hair.
The Church has warrant for what she has done,
And yet may do ; her mission is divine,
And Deity will lead her steps, as He
Has led them ever.

“ ‘ And what claim have you
Who in your stubborn schism still abide,
To match with hers ? The altars she has reared,
The glorious temples where, for centuries,
The faithful of all climes have knelt, and owned
Her rule imperial, where the mighty souls
Of builder and of artist willingly
Have laid their grandest offerings at her feet,
Whose aisles have echoed to the strains divine
Of souls inspired to chaunt her rule supreme,—
What is there in your cold and barren world
Of intellect to match with this ?’

“ ‘ The tale,’
She thus continued, ‘ of her matchless crimes,
Was never written. Fragments, it is true,
We have of that great history, here and there,
But only fragments. She has taught the world,
In guise unknown before, what ’tis to be
The neighbour. Suddenly from her ambush dark,
Where long in wily cunning she has lain,
Waiting her time, she leaps upon her prey.

Then, through her dread behest, the world has seen
The neighbour, at the alarum of her bells,
Fall, without warning, on his innocent
And unsuspecting neighbour, him with whom
In peaceful friendship, he had broken bread,
And, with enormous slaughter, thus prepare
Her reign of peace. Through her weird sorcery,
The brother then the brother has betrayed,
And in the stead of sweet, confiding trust,
She has established treachery and fear.'

“ ‘And have your saintly parsons never led
Their dull malignants in the selfsame wise,
To murder others for their sullen creed ?
Who lighted up the slow and lingering fire
By the Helvetian mere?’

“ ‘I see their long processions treading slow
The path of exile into foreign lands,
Never again to see their native fields,
To sink at last, after life's weary day,
In nameless graves where none but strangers shed
A tear over their alien destiny.
If all the myriad voices that have cried
Unheard, in vain, against the fearful wrong
And outrage they have suffered at her hand,
The mighty lamentation swelling on
And gathering through the centuries—a wail
Such as earth never yet has heard, would awe
The universe to silence. Never dream
That with her shaveling army chaunting on
Their ominous plain-song on their dreaded way,
Your church shall ever march to conquest more.

“ ‘I had been all content with you to pass
The mere-stone of the boundaries of time—

To journey thus from everlasting on
To everlasting. You have spoiled my life ;
And now I know that henceforth I must tread
The way that yet remains to me alone.'

“ Then Edgar Mowbray rose and said, ‘ The troth,
The only troth that ever could have joined
Us twain together with its sacred bond,
The blessing of our Holy Mother Church,
Has never yet been uttered, and we twain
Married have never been.’

“ She turned away
With but one glance of most supreme disdain,
As who should say, ‘ Forever !’

“ Midnight now,
With its ethereal shadows filled the sky,
And Mary Craven 'neath that Temple grand
Bared to the cooling air her queenly brow.
A crown of stars hung over, and afar
A threefold star blazed in the soundless deeps,
And a long line of kindred splendours led
Away into infinity.

“ The die
Was cast. Then with a decent haste she placed
Her ruined house in order, gathering up
The fragments of her fortune and returned
Back to her native country, sick at heart
Beyond all hope of healing, and there found
A quiet refuge where the Cornish sea
Moans with its muffled voice through day and night,
Baffled upon the rocky shores that stay
Its billows, heeding not and fearing not

That weird and cruel voice of mystery
That with great lamentation dies away
Over the waste of lone and windy dunes.”

This is the story ; and its memory cast
A shadow o’er my spirit while alone
We lingered in the woods of Aldornere,
Which, as we left them, gradual passed away,
Under the warmth and light of the April sun
And the cool flow of the fresh morning air,
That like a subtle and ethereal wine
Sent the pure blood all glowing through our veins.

And over mead and over knoll we went
And reached at last the bourne. Upon the sward
Before my cottage sloping down, we saw
The children playing, shouting in the sun.
Each had his cup and pipe—their pretty play
Was blowing bubbles, which, when blown, they tossed
With careless grace out in the lustrous air.

Out in the sun, on a vernal day,
A group of children, with joyous laughter,
The bubbles they blow are flinging away,
And merrily shouting, are following after.

Each deems the bubble himself has blown
Than every other bubble is fairer,
And hither and thither he follows his own
And fancies its beauty is rarer and rarer.

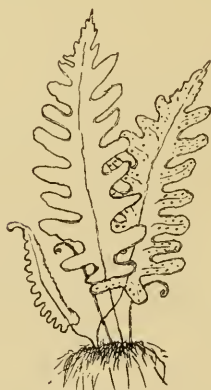
Over those globes with their crystal walls,
The crimson and green and gold are streaming,
And now, where the sunshine brightly falls,
With more ethereal splendour are beaming.

In unseen currents each elfin world
Rising and falling, is silently floating,
And, as through the air 'tis quietly whirled,
Each bubble-blower longs for such boating.

And, when it bursts, as it soon will do,
He gives not a moment to melancholy,
But launches, into the ether blue,
Another venture of harmless folly.

A fleeting hour he whiles away,
Thus mingling pleasure and dearer duty,—
His play with labour,—his labour with play,—
And fills his soul with visions of beauty.

Meanwhile he finds that his life is a train
Of even such changes and trivial troubles ;
And learns to look with a light disdain
On the blowing and bursting of all its bubbles.



WYNDHAM.³

The sun beamed in a deep October sky
With splendour such as when the Grecian feigned
Apollo drove his car across the blue
And limpid depths, and with a mystic light
Shone on the mountain-snows and azure sea



And the Arcadian meads and dells. But here
The magic genius of the splendid Greek
Was not, and all things wore the literal guise
Of a hard, unimaginative life
That boasted 'twas the real.

'Twas a day
For a great civil gathering set apart—

And Henry Fairfield sought the suffrages
Of those whose favouring voices had the power
To place him in the nation's parliament,
The councils of the state. The forest-shade
Was chosen for its screen against the sun,
And there, in front of the great multitude,
Upon the rostrum quietly he sat,
Not in the Roman fashion, robed in white,—
That satire truly had been all too keen,—
But quite as one secure of victory ;
And by his side sat Edgar Mowbray, now
A priest in holy guise, to give the scene
The proper sanction of the sanctity
Of the one only Church. And gathered there
Were many in whose accent was the tone
Of a fair island far beyond the sea
Whose children long had struggled in the bonds
Of priestly thralldom, by their oppressors taught
To look on them as foes who sought no less
Than their supremest welfare, and to hate
The only hand that could or would have saved.
Here, in this alien land, they were enrolled
By the same priestly arts, upon the side
Of tyranny, and trampled on the weak.

The choral minstrels played a favourite air,
And when 'twas finished, from the multitude
Arose tumultuous greeting, and the man
For whom the subaltern leaders marshalled them
To shout applause, stood forth to say his say.
And this it was that Henry Fairfield said :

“ This is the great and glorious era when
The sovereign people take command. The day

Of kings and nobles wanes. Yet, in this land
Long dedicate to liberty, by men
Whose fame has filled the world, there linger yet
Despisers of the people—men whose hearts
Beat only for the despots who so long
Have trampled on the noble poor man's rights
And ground him in the dust. Let them beware !
The people are arising—are aroused !
And with the thunder of their mighty voice,
Nay, with the lightning of their anger, they
Will smite the cravens, blasting them as with
The ire of heaven ! We march to victory
Under the banner of the stripes and stars,
Whereat the despot trembles ! High in the sun
The all-triumphant eagle soars and screams !

“ These men, the friends of nobles and of kings,
Would overthrow, with sacrilegious hands,
The glorious temple of our liberties,
And sink its dome and pillars in the dust.
They seek to break our sacred, plighted faith
To sister commonwealths 'neath sunnier skies,
Their laws and institutions to o'erwhelm
In mighty ruin, thus imperilling
All that is dearest to the nation's heart,—
To free from bonds sanctioned and proven divine,
And sanctified by Church, a servile horde
Condemned by holy writ for aye to be
Hewers of wood, drawers of water, for
The nobler race of which you are a part—
A noble part. They seek to drag you down,
Consort you with this low and servile race
That they themselves may lord it over you
And thrive and batten on your toil and blood.”

Much more with tawdry rhetoric like this
He uttered to his willing listeners,
Who echoed all his words with loud applause.

We sat apart, as being alien quite
To demagogue and priest, and wretched herd
Who came to shout approval of whate'er
The twain might say. Thus, while we sat alone,
With pencil on his ivory tablets there
Recorded, Edgar Wyndham gave to me
These lines, befitting well the shameful day :

“ The victor, crowned with laurel-crown,
Passed, in his hand the jewelled rod ;
The grovelling herd they bowed them down
As in the presence of a god.

“ Exulting through the servile herd,
He held with haughty brow his way ;
And heard the venal flatterer's word
Of soul more servile still than they.

“ But on his right there went before
Three veiled forms of fateful mien,
Who swept with feet untainted o'er
The ground, and though of him unseen,

“ Yet saw, with changeless visage bland,
His myriad weeping victims writhe,
And bore each in her shadowy hand,
A shadowy and immortal scythe ;

“ Whose viewless scythes, of temper keen
Should bring his haughty spirit low
Before he reached his goal, I ween,—
Who chaunt forever as they go—

“ Who chaunt forever as they go
To right all wrongs beneath the sun,
With soothing for the innocent woe,
‘ Thus is the eternal justice done !’

“ And though the laurel on his brow
Seem green to those who worship him,
He feels the wreath, he knows not how,
Is withered, and its lustre dim.

“ None shall escape the ghostly hand
Of the avenging deity,—
Elude her wheel upon the land,—
Her rudder following in the sea.”

After the noisy crowd had quite dispersed
I strolled with Edgar Wyndham through the wood,
Adown the knolls and o’er the pleasant fields
To Wyndham, hidden in its beechen shade.
Into his study, through the open door
And window came the cool, refreshing air
And shimmering sunshine, and we sat us down
And one by one recalled the day’s events,
For comment free, as friends are wont to do,
In social converse, while he gradual fell
Into the story of his earlier life.

There was a fascination in the theme
Under whose spell the hours fled swift away,
And hardly ended was the story ere
The twilight shadows had begun to fall.

“ I was from early boyhood’s pleasant days,
The most familiar guest at Aldornere.
George Brandon and myself were of one age
And chosen brothers, for we had the same

Deep love of nature, of all beautiful things,
And thought the best of our peers, and only they ;
And so we deemed ourselves Arcadians both,
Like shepherds of Virgilian song. His soul
Was tuned to music, as the finest lute ;
And any other friendship than our own
We needed not.

“ Oft, in the pleasant days
We roved the woods together—in the long
Dark winter-nights, by the warm, blazing hearth,
At Wyndham now, and now at Aldornere,
We read together on the magic page
Of England’s darling, nurtured at her heart,
Her midland fields and quiet meadow-streams.

“ And ’twas on such a night we read the page
Of the old chronicler who tells the tale
Of the Northumbrian king, that long ago,
Sat with his nobles in his castle-hall,
Around the glowing hearth, amid the gloom,
Debating of the mystic life to come,—
In council sat. But, of the nobles one
Said to the king, ‘ This present life of ours
Is as when on some wild and wintry night
It rains, and snows, and hails, and storms without,
And from the tempest through the window comes
A sparrow, fleeing from the beating storm.
A little while it flutters through the hall,
Cheered by the light and warmth, then out again
Into the darkness and is seen no more.
And whence it came and whither now ’tis borne
No one can tell. Thus is it with our life ;—
We enter and abide a little while
But whence we came and whither now we go
We know not.’ ”

“After silence long, we fell
Into deep converse fitting such a theme.
He said that even if this life were all,
Yet would he spend it nobly—that to live
In friendship such as that which bound us twain,
And linked with other friends both firm and true,
And with the noble of all ages thus,—
This thought, worn ever in our inmost heart,
Would be a precious amulet, to ward
All wavering from the soul away. And thus
We felt it light to brave the mighty world.
Even those whom death had hallowed bound us still
With golden links of memory to the true,
And thus repaid us more than hundredfold
For the poor lack of favour and applause
Such as the fickle multitude can give.
Thus passed the evening and the night away ;
Of all we spent together ’twas the last.

“But from this life, before the civil war
Had come upon us, I had crossed the sea,
To foreign climes, and like the wandering Greek,
Both many men and many cities saw.
I drank sweet draughts from the perennial springs
Where, by the sylvan Neckar’s castled hills,
The Muses with their melodies preside
Over immortal fountains,—and entranced
I floated down the ways of storied streams,—
Mused ’mid the ruins of a bygone age.
I heard the voice of mountain-waterfalls,
Mingled forever with the muffled roar
Of avalanches loosened by the sun,
And gathered by the mountain-path, amid
The falling sleet, the little tassel-flower,
And listened, as in dream, while overhead,

The skylark, circling, singing in the sun,
Bore on his wing the dew.

“ At once I stood
At sunset, on the moor of Col de Balme,
And saw the mighty mountain seated still,
With crown of everlasting snows, where gold
And rose and violet followed in a change
That seemed of magic,—seated as a king
Among his kindred princes, while before,
Spread out the twilight vale that faded far
'Mid amethystine shadows, and no sound
Disturbed the silence but faint-tinkling bells
Of distant herds upon the mountain-side.

“ But when, at last, there came the cruel war,
I hastened home to bear therein my part,
And found that wounded in the same he died.”

Resuming, after silence long, he said :
“ Time, the unfailing soother, has subdued
The sorrow. But, within my inmost heart,
His memory lingers sweetly, like a strain
Of tender music, mingling evermore
With all my highest moods ;—the tumult great
Of life can never drown that music deep.
I think of him with all things fair and grand,
The woods, the streams, the sea, the universe—
A symphony, a dirge,—he is to me
As is the sunshine and the pleasant spring.

“ Sometimes I muse with sorrow on his fate,
Dying so young, a beauteous future spread
Before him, as a country yet untried.
Yet passing in his youth, he thus escaped

All future evil, sorrow and disgrace.
Thus is he hallowed in my memory,
And thus has crossed the bounds where Mystery
Sits with her finger on her marble lips
In silence which no turmoil can disturb.

“ These lines, a record of our parting hour,
May seem of grief too keen, but they were true.

‘ ’Twas on a mild autumnal day,
We slowly wandered, arm in arm,
Through field and woodland, far away,
Lured by the season’s subtle charm.

‘ We heard the airs of autumn mourn
Among the rustling rushes sere,
And reached at last the churchyard-bourne
Whose oaks were fading with the year.

‘ Faintly the fields and meadows o’er
We heard the grouse’s muffled strokes ;
The purple leaves fell more and more
From those great, branching churchyard-oaks.

‘ There was the wandering thyme as deep
As in the summer days we see ;
Its fragrance lured to endless sleep,
With drowsy murmuring of the bee.

‘ Among those mounds of fading green
We lingered long, I know not why ;
Perchance it was the air serene,
Or the serener autumn sky,

‘ Or that serenest, thoughtful place
Whose sleepers slept without a breath,
And lay in calm and matchless grace,
The marble-still repose of death.

‘ The fleeting days have grown to years
 Since, when we knew that we must part,
I gathered from thy cheek the tears,
 And stored them in my heart of heart.

‘ Those years in many a distant scene
 With me too soon have passed away ;
And, ’mid these mounds of fading green,
 I stand, as then we stood, to-day.

‘ But thou, whom here no more I see,
 Hast made beneath the turf thy bed,
Hast joined the silent company,
 The increasing city of the dead.

‘ To thee, in that most distant land,
 No messenger can ever reach ;
There none can hear or understand
 This now disused, forgotten speech.

‘ If by its silent denizens
 We, too, forever are forgot,
No longing mortal ever kens,—
 The silent city answers not.

‘ But could I know that thou art still
 The same that thou wert wont to be,
My soul with silent bliss would thrill,
 And wait till, in eternity,

‘ Some infinitely distant time,
 Some infinitely far-off shore,
Should still, at last, this grief sublime
 And give thee back forevermore.

‘ But quite in vain are thoughts like these,—
 This grief nepenthe cannot still,
This pain no poppy-draught can ease,
 Nor soothe away this master-ill.

‘ And though I win those starry crowns
We strive for in this earthly strife,
This drop, exceeding bitter, drowns
All sweetness in the cup of life.

‘ Therefore these unavailing tears,
Therefore this sorrow, passing all
Our other sorrows, other fears,
For what is gone beyond recall.’ ”

And now, before the quiet, gliding days
Of dreamy autumn had passed quite away,
There gathered in the shadowy Wyndham woods
The men who with a firm resolve had said
The country’s grand device should not be made
A lie before all nations, nor the name
Of hypocrite be branded on the brow
Of Freedom, on whose altar they had sworn
With loyal hearts and true. And now, indeed,
Quite other were the men who gathered there.
Quite other were the calm and thoughtful words
Which Edgar Wyndham to the listeners said :

“ Would that I had such power to light the minds
And warm the hearts of you, my fellow-men,
As has the glorious sun we all behold
To light and warm the beauteous world around
With its free, genial beams. This earth is not
Of need, a place for sorrowing and despair ;
But if pure justice ruled there would be peace,
And kindness would follow in their train.
For us, we ask but perfect justice for
The poorest of the poor—nought of his race.
For those who for themselves and theirs demand
All rights, in bonds to hold their fellow-men
Is it not base indeed ? Many there are

Who ask the question which in days of old
The Roman noble asked the Nazarene—
What is the truth? But this, at least, we know,
That in a land where Justice does not reign
Supreme, her sister Peace cannot abide.
The ages teach this truth—the overthrow
Of many cities and the mighty fall
Of nations which had gathered to themselves
The various treasures of the world, all teach
This selfsame lesson. In the human heart
This truth is as its life-blood, that no man
Of right can lord it o'er his fellow-man.
The eagle, soaring in the blue serene,
Descries afar the coming storm,—the herd
Below are overtaken and destroyed.
The statesman, with a mind embracing all,
Knowing the laws that never bend or fail,
Sees where the storm will burst, and faithfully,
He warns his fellows, but they heed him not.

“Time will outweary all the petty frauds,
And all the petty schemes to quell the Truth,
Who yet upon her fair and rightful throne
Shall sit supreme. Be not disheartened, then,
Though Wrong and Falsehood triumph for a day—
For, they who triumph through the mob depraved
Sink finally from grade to lower grade,
Through dull indifference, then broad contempt,
Into eternal blank oblivion,
And through all time are never heard of more.”

He ceased, and sudden silence fell o'er all;
Then, after friendly greeting, all returned
The road they came, each to his separate home;
But for the triumph of the right the day

Had not yet dawned. The demagogue, once more,
Won through the voices of the multitude,
And soon, among his kind he took his seat
So easily won. But after many years,
In which he had pursued the low career
He thus had chosen for himself and sunk
Lower and lower, from afar there came
A rumour vague that in a foreign land
'Mid strangers, he had fallen, whether with
The suicidal dagger in his hand,
Or by an opiate draught was never known.

For Edgar Mowbray, from these wonted scenes
He, too, had vanished. Of his after-fate
No word was e'er returned. His lurking-place
Was doubtless in the shadow of the great
Conspiracy that holds in many lands
Places of refuge numberless, unknown,
For such as he.

To Wyndham now, once more,
We sauntered, full of thoughts of that which was,
And that which ought to be, and scarcely saw
The mighty vistas down the river dim,
Or the blue-budded gentian by the brook,
Amid our earnest parley. On the lawn,
Beneath a spreading beech, our favourite seat,
We sat us down at last and made review
Of what was past, and sought to shadow forth
The history to come.

Firmly to stand
For right, against the clamour of the crowd—
This was the touchstone of the troublous times.
The brave and noble then were proven gold ;

Others declined the test, or openly
Sided with the great Wrong. And everywhere
Around about us in the commonweal,
Ambitious men, to please the populace,
Held back the truth, or uttered falsehood base,
And finally to the low level sunk
Of the dull herd ; then, being underbid,
Bid lower still. The hireling demagogue
Was found no nobler than the grovelling king.

Then Edgar Wyndham said, “ This field was new,
The outspread page was fresh and white and clean ;
The priest and demagogue have spoiled it all.
But he who yields the thing he knows is true
A prey to baseness, and ignobly fails
Has nothing when he falls ; and though it be
Unseen of men, the vulture Envy gnaws
Unceasing at his vitals. But that man
Who to the truth and to himself is true,
E’en though he seem to all the world to fail,
Bears peace forever in his heart. He leads
Who does not seem to lead, and he who seems
To lead is oftenest led. These only keep
The leader’s place by watching warily
Until they see which way the current flows.”

And I, “ Brief space great clamour at their names,—
Then follows the eternal silence deep
Of all the after-centuries. Why should we
Be troubled when their baseness is success ?
We cannot have the fellowship of all—
That of the noble is enough for me,—
The noble of the present and the past.
The herd have no convictions, and are swept
Into whatever popular current draws

With strongest force, like driftwood in the stream.
The many turn with frivolous hearts away
From Justice and the men who dwell with her,
And therefore I, who this have seen, must praise
The man who looks alone unto the good.

“And one I know of genius grand and rare,
Who gives, through every manly word and deed,
Newer and fuller meaning to the best
That all the noblest of the poets say,
Who, knowing well the utter worthlessness
Both of the leaders and the led,—how all
The prizes of the state are borne away
By base intrigue, with cold and settled scorn
Has turned from all, and grand ensample given
To those who wait for better times. A few
There have been, in the ages past who strove
For fame and jewelled crowns and empery,
Nor were deterred by fear of bitter death ;
But now, that age of greatness passed away,
The many for all paltry prizes strive,
And though without great guerdons in their view,
Yet shrink not from the many meaner crimes
More than the mightier ones in days of yore
From fearful deeds of blood. I cannot hold
Those places to be honours which are gained
By grovelling and intrigue alone. The men
Who win them, with a fate but slightly changed,
Had been but fitting slaves to delve the mines.
When such as these are lauded by the mob,
It makes their boasted honours cheap and mean.”

“I, too,” he said, “have known who pitched his tent,
On a few, barren acres and thence draws
His living, free from all base servitude ;

The lichen lives and draws its sturdy life
Even from the bare and naked flint. To me
'Tis sweet to know he holds me worthy quite
To be his equal friend that will not change."

"The great enigma, still remains," I said ;
"Is there no retribution for the wrong,
The cruelty and outrage ? Must we deem
The oppressor shall forever trample thus
The weeping poor, and selfishly pursue
Unworthy ends, throughout his dread career,—
Horrors and crimes untold, unnamable,
From which the Muse of history severe
Turns with a silent and immovable scorn ?

"Rise, ye indignant shadows, and proclaim
The myriad wrongs that none but you could tell,
The secret murders of the silent night,
The slow assassinations of the day,
Of countless victims, who through hopeless fear
Uttered no murmur, waiting but for death,—
Longing for nothing but its sleep and rest—
The story of the enormous slaughters wrought,
On those who to the tyrant would not bow.
Rise ! ye indignant myriads and unfold
The awful records of the dungeon deep—
The fearful secrets of the voiceless grave !"

At last we parted, for the twilight now
Was deepening. Far along the shadowy plain,
The iron steed upon his winding way
Led his long train, one plume of snowy white
And one of pearly gray, and all was still.

Homeward I wended now through darkening paths,
And sought the sweet repose of peaceful sleep,
And woke not till the coming of the dawn.

The seasons follow with their endless change ;
And autumn faded into winter frore.
In the wide woodlands then the forest-trees
Wore all their jewels. When the golden sun
In princely splendour in the orient rose,
Not all Golconda, from its blazing mines,
Gave such a wealth of diamonds to the light,
While nature silent for the pageant lay.

Then, after winter, came the genial spring,
That sends a thrill through heart and nerve and brain,
That makes the poor forget the bitter cold,—
The poor so poor with them all pride is dead,—
That soothes away the sorrows of the heart,
That strengthens once again the noble soul
That in its labours for the right has failed,
That makes all men forget their brooding cares,
With influences magical and sweet.

Yes, 'twas the spring ; and the gray willow now
And the red-flowering maple bloomed again—
The alder hung its tassels o'er the brook,
Freed from its thrall. The sunshine's subtle gold
Melted into my veins,—the April air
Wrought in my veins once more its wonted thrill.
The great rose-window of the glowing east
Shone gloriously with its auroral hues
A grand and splendid oriel, fitting well
For the great temple of the universe !
On such a morn I sang this joyous song—
This joyous song of life and liberty :

“ I am the dauntless spirit brave
That never yet the gyve has worn ;
I rend the bonds that bind the slave,
But never yet his chain have borne.

“ I burst the iron prison-bars,
The threefold walls I raze amain ;
I greet the sky, the sun, the stars,—
Exult again, and yet again.

“ Who tread the mount with footstep sure,
With them I dwell in clearer light ;
I haunt the heathery mountain-moor
And mountain-mere by day and night ;

“ But dwell not less with them who flee
O'erpowered from enslavèd lands,
And find a refuge by the sea,
'Mid billows, mists and shifting sands,—

“ Whose pulses rhyme with chainless flow
Of mountain-winds, with breezy swell,—
With the wild waves that come and go,—
With these, with these, I gladly dwell.

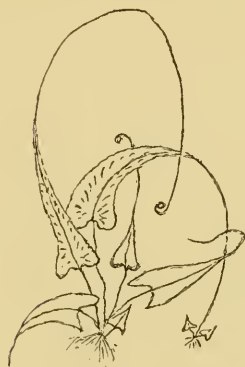
“ My forehead fair no crown beseems
But crown of amaranth or stars,—
No light but dawn or noonday-beams ;
No twilight dim my beauty mars.

“ For I am of the glorious morn—
The herald that foretells the day ;
My youth no time has ever worn—
I go before—I lead the way.

“ My spirit free they seek in vain
To fetter with the bond or gyve ;
I smile with high and calm disdain
On all who with that striving strive.

“ For my eternal freedom still
 With deathless love the nations long ;
For my unconquerable will,
 My matchless beauty fair and strong.

“ My voice has led on every shore,
 The battles of the mighty past,
And now, again, is heard once more
 In this defiant bugle-blast !”



HOW THE RHINEGRAVE EVIL-ENTREATED
THE STRANGER, AND WHAT FOL-
LOWED THEREAFTER.¹

A BALLAD.

It was in mild September, the gossamer it lay,
A billowy thread of silver, then slow through air away,
It floated o'er the river that scarcely bent the reed,
Where violet saffron-blossoms made purple all the mead.

The Rhinegrave with his nobles through the castle-gate
they went,
On joyance and on pastime their listless minds were bent ;
They talked of the fields and forests they were wont to
wander through,
And the heron from the waters that soared to the sky so
blue.

“ But who,” then cried the Rhinegrave, with wonder in
his eyes,
“ Are they who journey yonder, in seeming stranger-guise ?”
Then turning to his pages, “ Haste one of ye,” said he,
“ And ask of them what manner of men and whence
they be.”

Then, at his lordly bidding, the strangers forward came,
In front of them, their spokesman, trode one of goodly
frame,
And of right noble presence, but neither bent the knee,
Nor yet before the Rhinegrave his head uncovered he.

“Our home,” he said, “is England ; we thither wend again,
Through the Nether Lands that border upon the
Northern Main ;
And to the German Countries, in the name of God, our
Lord,
We bear the glad evangel of the everlasting Word.”

“But why,” then cried a courtier, “thus covered do ye
stand
In the presence of these nobles, and the lord of all the
land ?
And know ye not to princes, e’en the boor, though dull
and rude,
Will doff his cap as surely as they of gentle blood ?”

Replied the English Saxon, with countenance serene,
With voice all mild and gentle, and an unaltered mien,
“Of nought that is unseemly in our bearing here we wot,
And of any word ungente we have uttered, know we not.

“Men bend the knee to princes ; we yield not in this thing,
In the fair land of our fathers, e’en to our lord the king.
All men are of one brotherhood, we bare our heads alone,
To Him who rules all nations from an eternal throne.”

“These,” quoth the Rhinegrave quickly, “are of the
Quaker herd,
Who lead astray the rabble, with stubborn deed and
word,
And teach that from the people, all power and glory
springs,
That nerves the arms of princes, and crowns the brows
of kings.”

Replied the Angle calmly, with mildness in his eye,
With heart all sweet and humble, yet with a spirit high,
“For righteousness and justice we would be bold and
strong,
And work good deeds and kindly, and only fear the
wrong.

“For on the people’s blindness our hearts have looked in
ruth,
We bear to all a message of gentleness and truth ;
We bring good tidings only to thee and unto thine,
And bear ye loving kindness, O Lord of Falkenstein.”

But his men at arms the Rhinegrave he called unto him
then,
And said, “From out my borders see that ye hale these
men.”

Then, with the surly soldier the Angle went away,
And the lordling of the Rhineland he had his will that
day.

But the seeds the English Saxon, within that land had
sown,
Not all on ground so barren his generous hand had
strown ;
In castle and in cottage, there were whose hearts received
The words of truth and justice, which all their souls
believed.

And they nursed the sacred fire, while in his fatherland,
For the rights of man’s great brotherhood, again did the
Angle stand,
With Sidney, ’gainst the tyrants, who sought, with
haughty sway,
To lord it o’er the lowly, in England’s evil day.

And in a day of danger, of great and bitter stress,
He left the dales of England, for the distant wilderness ;
To lay the broad foundation of a great Commonweal,
With corner-stones of justice, not through the warriour's
steel.

In his brave barque, all boldly, he launched a goodly freight,
None other than the fortunes of a most noble State ;
And o'er the sounding ocean, through storm and foam
it passed,
Till, on the Arasafa, the Welcome slept at last.

And out of the sunny Rhineland, from many a quiet
hearth,
By the shore of the echoing Lorelei, and cloistered Non-
nenworth,
And from still pastoral valleys, where the smoke-wreath
rises through
The apple-orchards, melting in a sky of softer blue,

From many a hidden hamlet, from many a lowly cot,
Came they, who the Angle's lessons, had never yet forgot ;
And to the blue-eyed German, within this stranger-land,
In love his English brother stretched forth the friendly hand.

Where Conowingo's waters through dales of quiet flow,
And in the mighty shadow of sylvan Pokono,
And by the Susquehanna, on green Wyoming's breast ;
And beautiful Ohio, that seeks the golden West ;

Not without tears of sorrow, they reared the peaceful home,
Regretful tears for each fatherland, beyond the blue sea's
foam ;
And, having compassed freedom, for them and theirs, they
gave
The boon to the bondman, first to rend the fetters of the slave.

Then let us sing the Saxon, who launched the Welcome's
keel,
And laid the broad foundations, of our dear old Common-
weal ;
And the blue-eyed German with him, who sought our
peaceful shore,
To light the fires of freedom, we will guard forevermore !

THE BALLAD OF MARGARET GARNER.²

The housewife, on the midnight hearth, she stirred the
smouldering brands,
And kissed her boy that slumbering lay with silent-folded
hands,
Nor knew a mother, with her babes, in hunger and in pain,
Far in the woods was shivering in the Autumnal rain.

That weary thrall had delved amain on distant fields whose
dew
Was of those tears that are outpoured for aye by inly rue—
Where the day she spent in weary toil from morn till
evening drear,
And the night was passed in heavy sleep broken by sudden
fear.

Now the midnight flash of the equinox, it came with blind-
ing gleams,
And through the wilderness the roar of swoll'n and sullen
streams—
Slow treading o'er the wild morass she sought a footing sure,
While the night-heron croaked far o'er the drenched and
dreary moor !

And still at morn that wandering thrall to journey on was
fain,

While o'er the woodlands steadily there fell the heavy rain ;
And save the falling of the rain, the wilderness was dumb—
Or the chirp of the sparrow banqueting on the gold-and-
crimson plum.

The gray hawk, in the air above, was soaring for his prey,
And then, all wildlyscreaming, wheeled o'er the woods away ;
And as she led her little brood on that journey long and drear,
The shadow Doubt it went before—behind there followed
Fear !

The wildswan led his followers in lengthening lines and slow,
Winging their way far southward before the coming snow ;
But she into the coming snow, and the winter fierce and wild,
Hurried with hasting feet, as to the mother's arms her child.

And still before her foe she fled, like to the wounded deer,
With the hungry vulture following fast upon her flank and
rear,

Or like the dove that wildly flies, in her most bitter need,
Before the swift and arrowy flight of the pursuing glede !

She came to a great stream. The wave it murmured low
and meek,

And in the Beauteous River she bathed her burning cheek ;
In the pirogue, chance-found, awhile, her dizzy brain did
reel,—

Then on the rounded pebbles grated the sudden keel.

But still through all this pain and fear her weary toil was
nought ;

And even on this new-found shore still weariless she sought
For her worn feet awhile to find some safer resting-place,
And by the hearth-stone secretly to rest a little space.

But even there the chief of state and the chief of law they
lay

In the law's dread, wily ambush, her footsteps to bewray,
And with their human beagles from their covert on her
sprang,

And fastened wild upon her with fierce and cruel fang !

She seized the knife for murder and said, "Thou shalt
be free,

My child, and wait a little while and I will come to thee—
Free from their pitiless talons whose prey is still the weak,
That through death's portals only can find the rest they
seek.

"They spread their shameful fame far o'er the earth's most
distant lands,

But bind their thralls with heavy chains, and scourge
with cruel hands ;

With the gold they wring from our worn thews, their
barque of life they deck—

My only freight was little, and that is utter wreck."

Then, 'mid a craven people, this woman grand they bound.
The canting priest, the placeman mean, and the dooms-
man standing round ;

And she who in the olden time scarce finds her queenly
mate,

Thus vainly having struggled, she yielded to her fate.

And she of whom, in after-times, the world shall proudly
speak,

As of the imperial Roman, or of the haughty Greek,
Was led down to the waters by vile and hireling hands,
A great despair within her heart and gyves upon her
hands.

Before her foes she quailed not, nor closed her eyes in sleep,
Far on the rushing river, with dark and moaning deep,
Nor when on the stranger-waters 'mid the wreck, at dead
 of night,
She saw, on the lips of her drowning child, death's ghastly,
 ghostly white !

And on the quay the bargain, as the day before, was made,
And in the mart the chapman still plied his paltry trade ;
And from his gloomy rostrum, the parson's whine still
 rang,
As he told his threadbare story, with a more ghostly
 twang.

And there was also strife of them who, for the placeman's
 place,
And badge of shame, unceasing strove with bold and
 brazen face,
“ But God, who reigns forevermore,” she said, “ with ven-
 geance sure,
Shall come on them who, night and day, do spoil His
 weeping poor.”

And far, among the stranger, they sought her out again,
And offered her surcease, at last, from thraldom's bitter
 pain ;
She grasped the draught of freedom—but ah ! these cruel
 slips !
Again the pitiless doomsman he dashed it from her lips !

And whither now she drifted she recked not, neither wist,
While the black wherry southward, into the thickening
 mist,
Fast lessening, floated, laden with her anguish and her
 fears,
Adown the sullen river that drains the Vale of Tears !

TO A WINDHARP.

Of many far-off voices faint that swell
And mingle gradual in an unseen choir,
That near and nearer float, and then retire,
Dying away as in a distant knell,
Of deep, unutterable moods, that tell—
Then sweetly swell again, and rising higher,
Slow in the infinite depths afar expire,
As in a last, ineffable farewell,
Lyre of the Wind, through every exquisite change,
The soul, from out its depths doth answer thee,
Far wandering on through symphonies new and strange,
That hint of moods elsewhere, perchance to be,
While in those harmonies of boundless range,
Thou murmurest of the infinite mystery.

Those mingled voices seem to call away
From this great tumult, where the myriads moil
Amid its baseness and its endless toil,
Into some country of serenest day,
Through regions new and all unknown to stray,
And quite beyond all echo of the coil
Where fate our efforts can forever foil,
In the fair Islands of the Blest away ;
Far from this changeful life where many dream,
And o'er their saddened lot where many weep,
And never more to be 'twere better, deem,—
Beneath the turf to rest in endless sleep,—
To gain, at last, a great repose supreme
Where all were hushed in an eternal sleep !

NIAGARA.

Far-stretching in the morning beams,
And blazing in the golden gleams,
The mingling of a thousand streams !

And trembling many-hued, among
Thy shifting mists, the rainbow hung
Before thee, o'er thy gulf is flung.

Over thy wave of tender green
That falls forever down serene,
Then foams into the whitest sheen,

Its gauzy veil the mist-film throws,
Through which the shimmering sunshine glows
Down to thy deep of watery snows.

The avalanche, from mountain-height,
Sweeps, shuddering, in its awful might,
And robed in mantle dim and white,

Slow gathering, in its downward sweep,
Into some gulf's unfathomed deep,
With wild, and long, and fearful leap,

Down, down, into the abysmal mist
Whose mysteries mortal never wist,
No eye hath seen nor ear may list ;

And silence all the air doth fill
Save of some moorland-bird the trill,
Or trickling of the mountain-rill.

But ever-changing thou dost pour,
Yet still the same, with solemn roar,
O'er thy dim cliff forevermore.

And standing on thy shore, I seem,
As one who in a silent dream,
And launched on some mysterious stream,

Is borne, from whence he knows not, hither,
And with vast sweep is hurried thither,
He knows not why, he knows not whither ;

While through my brain, in sounding rhyme,
All thoughts eternal and sublime,
Course slow, the universe, and time,

And endless change that ceaselessly
Hymns of eternity through thee,
And I enter into Infinity.

Published 25th June, 1859.

HORICON.³

Wild mere, upon thy bosom deep and still,
Far from life's meanness and its feverish strife,
How soon I could forget all wrong and ill,
And sorrow in the world forever rife.

All malice too I soon could quite forget
Here where life's low desires and passions cease,
And 'neath the solemn gaze of nature yet
Could yield myself into the arms of peace.

The white stag here at noonday drinks his fill
By brooklets black with fir-trees dropping dew ;
Then far o'er hazy hills, to fresher still
He wanders, and to well-springs wild and new.

The drowsy wavelets, crinkling, ever run
Over the noiseless sands of silver here ;
And the white waterfowl far in the sun
Lies dreaming on the dim and glimmering mere.

He and his mate the summer long there find,
The snowy water-blooms that lie asleep,
And give their sweetness to the wandering wind
That glides unseen above the slumberous deep.

There ever at the rosy morning hour,
Where rests the wave or in green eddies whirls,
Linked light from leaf to leaf, from flower to flower,
The gossamer hangs heavy with its pearls.

The birdlet brown here trills his warblings fleet,
O'erjoyed with his own music, in the sun,
And running o'er all changes wild and sweet
Returns unto the theme he had begun.

On yon Dark Mountain slow and silently
The great, broad shadows in the sunshine die,
And soft, deep shadows in each sleeping tree
Like a green twilight here forever lie.

When down o'er all these hills, and dells, and isles,
The slumberous twilight lowers like a dream,
We wonder if the world that round us smiles
Is real, or to fancy do but seem.

Wild mere though ne'er I gaze upon thee more,
Still here or wandering far in foreign lands,
Thy beauty all is mine—thy lovely shore—
These hours of peace upon thy silent sands.

TO A SKYLARK.

Written on seeing one restlessly endeavouring to escape from its cage,
at a bird-fancier's, in Philadelphia.

Against thy prison-bars still fiercely beating
With restless wings, striving to find thy way
Out from thy gloomy cell and give thy greeting
Triumphant to the broad and glorious day,
In vain endeavour thus thy short, and fleeting,
And cheerless life thou here wilt wear away.

Poor alien, can it be that thou art haunted
By visions such as the sad exile sees,
Of some deep, amethystine gulf, enchanted,
Far in the bosom of the Pyrenees,
Where, by no hand of mortal ever planted,
Wild blooms are reddening for the golden bees?

Or, maddening dreams of some blue lakelet lying
'Mid the white Alps, mirroring but the sun,
A star, or warbling skylark o'er it flying
To meet the morn, or, when the day was done,
Sinking unto his mate, and sweetly trying
His vespers o'er his nest so nearly won?

Or, yet, of England's hills, and of the auroral
And crimson beams flushing the orient through;
Upon her highland-moors the rose-tints floral
Deepening on heath-bells wet with sweetest dew,
Longing, with longing vain, to join the choral
And exquisite chaunt far in those skies of blue?

Thy alien fellow-captives never greeting,
Gathered in this dim cell from many lands,
Thou wearest out thy little life and fleeting,
Striving all vainly with thy prison-bands,
Beating against them with a restless beating,
To gain that Temple grand not made with hands.

THE LADY OF LIEBENSTEIN.¹

A BALLAD.

The wandering swallow at twilight went
To her home neath the castle battlement,
And gently down, in her clay-built nest,
With drowsy twitter she dropped to rest,
And proud through the gateway opening wide,
Went the red-cross knight, with his Grecian bride,
And the shadows settled below on the Rhine,
And over Sternfels and Liebenstein,
And the festal lights they beamed afar,
And Sternfels shone like the evening star.
Through the halls all hung with the spear and lance,
Went the knight and the maid in the winding dance,
And golden goblets, with roses bright,
Were filled with the red wine's crimson light,
And the harp was swept by the minstrel bold,
As he grandly chaunted the legend old,

And the hours went by like a gliding dream,
As they pass in Elysian fields we deem.

But hushed were the halls of Liebenstein—
There was neither dance nor the crimson wine,

And Silence, gloomy and lowering,
Brooded above like an evil thing.

From under the gateway, with sorrow bent,
A grim and mailèd warrior went,

And stood in the halls of Sternfels lone,
For the dance was over, the feast was done ;

And there strode to meet him, in armour bright,
Through the opening portal, the red-cross knight,

And the brothers, grimly fronting stood
A moment still, ere the deadly feud.

Short space and silent they held their breath,
As gazing each on the spectre Death ;

And slowly, with neither sigh nor word,
Each drew from its scabbard his flashing sword,

When, with tresses bright as their armour's shine,
Trode 'twixt them the Lady of Liebenstein.

“ Cease, brothers mine, for more to me
Ye now can never, never be.

“ Ah ! when your sire now gray with grief,
And trembling eye like the Autumn leaf,

“ Under his roof, to his own hearth-stone
Took me, an orphan weak and lone,

“ Forsaken, with neither power nor place,
Albeit come of a knightly race,

“ To dwell with ye all side by side,
And *he* won my heart, as his future bride,

“ Who far through other climes to rove
But went to find him another love,

“ How could I dream that thus for me
This deadly feud should ever be?

“ Or ever I enter the cloister dim,
To chaunt in secret the holy hymn,

“ Thou who hast broken to me thy faith,
And thou who hast loved to the bitter death,

“ From hatred dire and deadly cease ;
Give and receive the kiss of peace.

“ Mine eyes refuse their wonted flood,
But my heart, in secret, weeps tears of blood ;

“ From off my soul this burden take,
I pray, for Jesu Christ his sake !”

The beadsman by her side that stood,
He made the sign of the holy rood.

Each brother-heart, from hate at rest,
Then warmly beat on a brother's breast ;

And slowly out on the night-wind's swell,
The maiden murmured her last farewell,

And never more her footsteps fell
In those ancient halls she had graced so well,

But all unknown, as erst she came,
She passed away with a feignèd name.

With a lover new the fickle Greek
Fled, as the rose on her fading cheek ;

And the knightly brothers passed away
Under the watch of the warder gray.

The names of all in the past are lost ;
This story only time's waste hath crossed.

The knight and the maid have passed away,
And the falling walls with moss are gray,

The halls are fearfully still and lone,
And the bramble covers the broad hearth-stone,

And the cony there hath made his house,
And the nightly owl, and the flittermouse.

The sere leaves fall on the rising gale,
That wails through the ruin a dreary wail,

And the Autumn clouds begin to lower,
And the raven croaks on the ruined tower.

And often here, in the after-time,
Shall the wanderer come from a distant clime,

And down by the Rhine his way shall wend
As he leans on the arm of his chosen friend,

And mournfully tell the tale I have sung
In the alien tones of his stranger-tongue,

And add, as he muses of time and death,
“ ’Tis thus that the ancient legend saith.”

LISSAU.³

On Lissau shone the rising sun,
The lark his carol had begun,
Far-soaring from his night's repose.
The dew was in the opening rose.

But singing lark nor morning rays
Awoke to life the Lissau ways,
And in her streets there was no tread
To break the unwonted silence dead ;
Yet morning twilight there would soon
Burst forth into unwonted noon.

In Lissau hamlet, life had run
From father on to stalwart son,
Calm gliding on, from age to age,
Without a mark on history's page ;
Yet many a life of sturdy worth
Had passed beside the hamlet-hearth,
And after quiet life's surcease
Had vanished there in death and peace.

But southward far, with deepening awe
Astound, the men of Lissau saw
A sign of fear. ’Twas not the rain,—
The tempest deluging the plain
With mighty flood.

As one in haste,
The reeling whirlwind leaves a waste
Behind, and on, with heavy tread,
A thing of wonder and of dread,
Whereat the cheeks of men grow pale,
Armed with the lightning and the hail,
O'er harvest fields of blasted corn,
And lordly forest oaks uptorn,
O'er wreck of homes, and houseless men,
Nor turning on its path again,
It stalks upon its fearful way,
With none its blind career to stay.

But this was not the formless form
Of fear,—the blind and blinding storm.
The darkening cloud, with deepening awe
The silent men of Lissau saw,
Was of a vast and moving horde,
Whose symbols were the cross and sword.

With couriers robed in sable stole,
With ominous plain-song, and the toll,
The warning toll of sullen bell,
They came with steady purpose fell.

Before that league of power and hate
That lowered afar,—a coming Fate,—
The dwellers of the hamlet knew
Nor justice fair, nor courage true,
Could aught avail. With dauntless heart,
They bravely chose the nobler part,
Gathered their little all in haste,
And left of Lissau but a waste.

Upon the mount, above the flood,
 The dwellers sad of Lissau stood,—
 The maiden in her youthful charms,
 The mother, with her child in arms,
 The stalwart son, with heart of ire,
 And with toil-hardened palm, the sire,
 Who, 'mid the hurrying tumult wild,
 Led by the hand his little child.

As faithful friends, they left behind,
 In deadly league, the flame and wind,—
 Made of their homes one mighty pyre,
 That 'mid the all-destroying fire,
 Vanished in mingled smoke and flame,
 And left of Lissau but a name.

They banished, as they could, their fears,
 Brushed from their eyes the blinding tears,
 Then, turning sadly as they must,
 They from their garments shook the dust,
 With last embrace and severing hands
 Departed into sundered lands.

TO A DAISY.

—— “The Daisie,
 That well, by reason, men it call may
 The Daisie; or els the eye of the day.”

CHAUCER.

I found thee far upon an English field,
 Sunning thyself upon that golden day
 When, through idyllic meadows rich and green,
 I wandered from the city wide astray.
 Deep in the blue and beamy air above,
 Unseen, the skylark trembled in the sun,
 Yet, o'er his ditty sweet of joy and love,
 I heard him warbling run.

Then, ere thy name was told

By her who reigns within thy realm a queen,
Whose fitting crown were a rich daisy-wreath

Woven of blooms gathered in meadows green,
Warm, summery suns beneath,— [gold,—

Blooms snow-white, crimson-fringed, with heart of
With loving divination I divined

Thou wert the daisy of my boyhood's dreams,
But which I then had never dreamed to find
By English streams

And wandering far through other lands, I found

Under the shadow of the walls of Rome,
Thy sister-blooms that broidered all the ground
Above two English hearts that, far from home,
Lay buried there ;

And, later still, I gathered others where
The Switzer's little son, with eyes of blue,
That spoke the language of his German heart,
Found them amid the dew,
Uttering thy name in his sweet stranger-tongue—
His heart its little song of loving sung,
And in that harmony beat well its part.

And where the Neckar and the lordly Rhine

Went winding down together to the sea,
I found on German ground fair sisters thine
That turned my heart to England and to thee.

Now, in the dreamy Indian Summer, here

In this wild western land,
Amid the quiet of the fading year,
Musing of Chaucer and old Saxon times,
With book in hand,
Bright with the beauty of the ' Flower and Leaf,'
I sing this songlet brief
Of thee, oft sung in many a hundred rhymes.

LA NOTTE DI MICHELANGIOLO.⁷

Pale Dawn that struggles with a dream of Day,
And beaming Day, that crowned with golden light,
Seems glorying in his own radiance bright,
And Twilight, fading into Night away,
Those forms that o'er the fleeting Hours hold sway,
And o'er the changeful lives of men have might,
And long have ruled the nations in their flight,
What, in thy heavy swoon to thee are they?
There is an infinite sorrow in thy mien,—
A sorrow wearied into endless sleep,
As thou hadst drank, in thy despair serene,
Of poppy or mandragora some deep
And sluggish draught, and thus hadst drowsèd been,
And the dead silence of thy woes didst keep.

In San Lorenzo's chapel gray and dim,
Hath the old master wrought this thought in stone,
And toiling there in silence and alone,
Has for all ages left this dream of him.
The tyrant, too, in armour clad and grim,
Looks down in sullen gloom from off his throne,
And Mary, mother, o'er her child doth moan,
And over all steals the cathedral-hymn.
While ever, in the throbbing city round,
Life is one scene of wide and stifled woe;
The mournful-eyed Italian aye hath found
The fate so drear, embodied long ago
For his sad land, sunk in her heavy swoond,
By the great, sorrowing soul of Angelo.

Columbia, steering through these stranger-seas
To thee, oh, could the Italian pilot bring
No eastern tidings of the young dayspring
Nor golden day, but only such as these?
Let not this heaviness thine eyelids seize
And o'er thy heart a death-cold slumber fling,
Leaving thee in an endless slumbering,
Thy draught dull-drained to the drowsy less.
Ah, though the morn is beaming gloriously,
The night with all its dusky shadows past,
Of all the nations thou alone shalt lie
Sunk in thy sluggish dream, when, at the last,
The Angel bright of Freedom, hurrying by,
Shall rouse all nations with his trumpet-blast !

ISIS.^s

I am whatever was and is.
And also all that is to be ;
No magian wise with magic his,
Hath e'er unveiled the mystery.

They name me with unnumbered names,
In every age, in every land,—
On snow-fields red with polar flames,
And on the barren desert-sand.

By widely-sundered tribes my praise
Beneath both sun and stars is sung ;
They chaunt of my mysterious ways,
In every clime, in every tongue.

The bard, lone musing by the sea,
Hears, in its wide and wandering swell,
A whisper of the mystery
He dimly feels, but cannot tell.

While musing thus, he strives in vain
To grasp the thought that baffles him,
A wider, more mysterious main
Spreads out before him, vast and dim.

And baffled in the end he stands
On the last mountain-top of mind,
Seeking o'er glimmering seas and lands,
The mere-stone which he cannot find.

In depths unknown, in worlds unseen,
That in your language have no name,
'Mid starless night or solar sheen,
I am, through every change, the same.

The grass that creeping robes the ground,
Renews through me its emerald warm,—
The oak, with crown of leafage crowned,
So manifold and multiform.

The iris, trembling in the sun,
Or paler in the moon's white ray,
A type of forms through which I run
By night no less than glowing day ;

And the green billow of the sea,
Dissolving on the winding shore,
A changeful symbol is of me,
In endless round forevermore.

And though forever I return
 Again, yet is it not to stay ;
And though for me ye ever yearn,
 Still, from your grasp I haste away.

Preluding with grave murmurings
 Through melodies that need not words,
With hand unseen I touch the strings,
 And rise through higher, grander chords,

And wandering on through infinite themes,
 And varying infinitely still,
I chaunt my changes, as of dreams,
 Which all the soul with longing fill.

These symphonies through life that roll,
 Whose meaning ne'er has been divined,
Leave in the tranced and listening soul
 A music vague and undefined.

Thus, waking deathless longings deep
 Which are the soul's immortal breath,
I ward away the fatal sleep
 Which were the spirit's final death.

And though I leave unsatisfied,
 Yet is it all without annoy,
For, wandering through mine empire wide,
 Ye find a calm, perpetual joy.

And thus I stir within the soul
 The striving sweet, withouten strife,—
Your aspirations deep controul ;
 I am, indeed, your proper life,—

The life that fills all space, and sways
The evil with its justice strong,
That moving on through hidden ways,
Serenely overthrows the wrong,—

The life that strengthens all who know
The Right, and in its name have bled,—
Who overthrow the Wrong that so
The Right be stablised in its stead.

I am Truth that was and is,
And shall throughout all æons be ;
No magian grand with magic his,
Shall e'er unveil the Mystery.

ABDALLAH, SON OF AMROU.

Abdallah, Son of Amrou, sat alone,
Amid the ruins of a city vast
That in the immemorial, shadowy past,
Discrownèd kings her servile slaves had shown.
The stork upon his column, as a throne,—
Back through the twilight-crimson, fading fast,
Returned from distant waters,—sunk at last,
And settled down as moveless as the stone.
From granite lips of sphinxes and of kings
No whisper fell upon the listening ear,—
The Nile, from his far-off, mysterious springs,
Flowed silent by, as if in awe and fear :
The Son of Amrou, musing on these things,
As in a dream gazed o'er the desert drear.

TO ENGLAND.

Written on my return, after a residence on the Continent.

Land of my fathers ! though a western sun
Shone on my birth, thy free and peaceful shore
With warmly-beating heart I tread once more,
In stranger-lands my wanderings being done ;
For I return not unto thee as one

Who is an alien ; in my heart's deep core
There is of love for thee a generous store,
And shall be till my sands their course have run.
Of all the nations manifold that dwell

Upon the continents and isles of earth,
How few are they who feel and show so well
The brotherhood of common human birth :
And there are none whose bosoms ever swell
With manlier courage or more solid worth.

By thy white cliffs forever at whose feet
The waves unroll, the snowy sea-fowl play,
Amid the flashing of the sunny spray,
Or on whose walls the surging billows beat ;
Or where thy waters, welling pure and sweet,
Far from the tumult of the shore away,
In quiet though sequestered valleys stray
Or in the sleeping mere's still bosom meet,
Thy master-poets have, with colours warm,
Hallowed, in our dear common tongue, the ground,
The daisied field, all filled with many a form
Of beauty moving to melodious sound,
Until ' our very hearts have caught the charm
That sheds a beauty over earth ' around.

The mitred monk who rules at Rome would fain
Have these fair realms once more within his power,
And with his stealthy aliens, hour by hour,
Is labouring for thine overthrow amain.
Be wise and show thy humblest that thy gain
Is their great gain—raise up thy poor who cower
In ignorance and vice ;—all storms that lower
Around thee then shall threaten thee in vain.
The memory of thy rule of former time
Hath lost its bitterness, its olden smart,
With us, and but one unrepented crime
Of ours hath power to keep us still apart :
And but for this in brotherhood sublime
We should embrace each other, heart to heart.

Rest sure that what there is of good and true,
Of love of freedom and unchanging right,
Of all that is the strength of lasting might,
Must be for thee, thine every trial through.
And we who the same pathway tread anew,
In a new-risen sun's increasing light,
And, haply, to a goal far-off and bright,
Feel that our honour were thine honour too.
Ne'er to his level stoop whose crown was won
By dyeing in his brother's blood his hands,
In order's holy name, and blush has none
Before the world in whose broad gaze he stands,
For Truth and Freedom everywhere are one,
And they shall reign at last o'er many lands.

Nor stoop to make thy soil a hunting-ground
For him who comes with freedom on his tongue,
And slavery in his heart, who all hath wrung
From his worn bondmen, 'neath his footsteps ground ;
Nor yet bewray the exile who hath found

A refuge on thy shore, and who hath clung
 To thee in trust ;—thy glorious bards have sung
 That shore is free—let Freedom guard it round.
 Thus may we out into the future go
 With hopeful hearts to try its wide unknown
 Together, faithful to the true, and so
 Sure of grand conquest through the right alone—
 Not the sword's conquest, with its infinite woe,
 But clad in armour by the Truth beshone !

Dover, England. 1854.

TO CHARLES C. BURLEIGH.

Jeder grosse Mensch will für die Ewigkeit gearbeitet haben.

SCHILLER.

There is no nobler sight in life—
 In silvered age or stalwart youth—
 Than 'mid the meaner common strife
 A heart right loyal to the truth.

A heart like thine that can endure
 The failure of the right to see,
 Unflinching, still deeming sure
 For truth the final victory.

From the broad chest and tireless thew
 In agony great sweat-drops start,
 And suffering wild throbs madly through
 The pulses of the world's great heart.

But now the crownèd king must flee,
 The kaiser tremble on his throne,
 And Freedom's watchword gloriously
 Is passed from zone to farthest zone—

Where silence o'er the desert reigns—
The sands the Bedouin wanders o'er,—
Over the vast and snow-white plains
Around the pole sea's regions frore—

O'er earth's broad continents where smiles
The golden sunshine, full and free ;
To all her green and palmy isles,
O'er every wide and sunny sea.

And the strong league of mind and power
God's trembling poor no more shall dread,
But sing, with brimming hearts, the hour
When Liberty and Genius wed.

Then shall the weary slave no more
Weep at her labour in the sun,
Nor groan upon her cabin-floor
At nightfall when her toil is done,

Nor Power nor Pride, with iron tread,
Trample upon the weak again—
Unheard the hungry cry for bread
Among the suffering sons of men.

This age of glory to foretell
'Tis thine—a fitting task sublime ;
'Tis thus, with trusting heart, right well
Thou labourest for all coming time.

TO PARKER PILLSBURY.

My friend revered, you who have seen,
With vision clear and soul serene,
Whole decades of the history mean
With which our nation has defaced
The stainless page whereon it traced
The record of its shameful deeds,
For future times, I know there needs
No word of mine to place your worth
Among the noble names of earth,
Even if these, my simple rhymes,
Could hope to reach those after-times
When what is life to you and me
To others shall be history.

Here, on a broader, vaster field
Than the world's story has revealed
Before, with purpose base and vile,
With cunning low and stealthy wile,
The demagogue still holds his place,
And boldly shows his brazen face—
Like to the poisonous mushroom,
That springs to life 'mid sultry gloom—
And, withering like a thing of ill,
Is followed soon by viler still.
On the dead level—drear expanse—
Of their own insignificance,
Here microscopic statesmen toil
For notoriety and spoil,
And fawn and cringe for wealth and place—
Most abject of the human race—

Far-stretching, in their motley dress,
In a long line of littleness ;
While that vast army's hosts are led
By one who lends a deeper dread
Unto that name of hate and fear,
The abhorrèd name of buccaneer,—
And steers the pirate-ship of state
Straight on the hidden rocks of fate.

Here the weak mariner in the tide
Of the dark river, deep and wide,
Is onward swept, with mighty sweep,
Into that wide, unbounded deep
Where, the sole needle cast away
That shows the star of steady ray,
He laughs to scorn the God who yet
His bark, the swelling sails all set,
In wreck complete shall dash away
And leave no vestige to the day !

The weary exile here once more
Who, fleeing from his native shore,
Seeks, unsuspecting, now to stand
On Freedom's side, in Freedom's land,
By Despot Power is singled out,
Led to his hosts with deafening shout,
And with those cohorts dread is told,
And, will he, nill he, is enrolled :
And though he fruitless struggle, still
Is moulded by that mighty will ;
And by the side of beauteous youth,
That, knight-like, vows his heart of truth,
Looks on while Slavery twines and holds
Fair Freedom in its snaky folds,
And coldly lists his anguish-cry,
Laocoön in his agony !

Freedom ! thou word of olden fame—
How little is there in a name,
And yet how much ! A thoughtless herd,
Led captive by that magic word,
Here shout the praise of those who scorn
The man to honest labour born,
And to earth's lessons add this last.
That, after all the dangers past,
Freedom must feel the deadly steel
Most in the slumbering Commonweal !

My friend revered, your highest praise
It is that in these evil days—
These long, these wearing, wearying years,
Marked by dark millions' unseen tears—
Firm and undaunted you have stood,
Still battling for the true and good ;
Forever steadfast for the right
While others, in ignoble flight,
Have left our scattered ranks and thin,
Where treachery oft has entered in—
With stalwart arm in battle brave,
And eye still fixed upon the slave,
Whom you have sought and seek to save.

TO THE MEMORY OF CHARLES F. HOVEY.

Our friend beloved, with whom we went
Along life's hot and dusty way,
With cheerful hearts for many a day,
Unto a distant land is sent.

We know that with a loving hand
God never yet hath ceased to give,
And that some other one may live
In that deserted place to stand.

But though we know that this is true,
We cannot other do than fear.
Upon thy hand I drop this tear,
Brave friend ! as now I say adieu.

And though God's universe is grand
And vast, yet still we do believe
(Nor, therefore, will too greatly grieve)
That we once more shall clasp thy hand.

TO A DEMAGOGUE.

The waiting nation to the truth to win
How easy, hadst thou had that purpose vast ;
Willing had then with thee the people cast
Their lot, and on the future entered in.
Then, far above the world's ignoble din,
In heights where nevermore a place thou hast,
Within that deepening night, the solemn past,
Thy name an ever-beaming star had been.
Thou didst prefer the empty clamour loud
Of ignorance and baseness meanly born,
And to thy fall, thy princely head hast bowed
Like to the bright and glorious star of morn ;
Therefor thou hast the applauses of the crowd,
And of the noble, deep, undying scorn !

THE WANDERING JEW.

He passed across the twilight waste,
A spectral shadow, dimly traced,
And vanished far, as one in haste.

And ne'er, through night or weary day,
He may his endless wandering stay,
Though generations pass away.

And fading, as the fading grass.
The fleeting generations pass,—
Or visions in a magic glass.

And seeking evermore, in vain,
A respite from his inly pain,
He comes again, and yet again.

Once, as he sat beside his tent,
A stranger came, with wandering spent
And 'neath his heavy burden bent.

And hungered and with travel sore,
Deep sorrow in his face he wore,
And sought to rest beside the door.

Upon the stranger sad he turned,—
His heart with sudden anger burned,—
And from his threshold fiercely spurned.

Whereat, a deadly shudder went
Through all the earth and firmament,
As of the heart of nature rent.

And straightway, on his burdened breast,
A hand of iron, stifling, pressed,
And drove him forth in wild unrest,

Through that inexpiable crime,
To goad him on, from clime to clime,
Throughout the flight of coming time.

And evermore, from waste to waste,
A spectral shadow, dimly traced,
He swiftly flees, as one in haste.

Threading the city's crowded street,
With none his stranger-form to greet,
He passes on with hurrying feet.

And where Palmyra, ruined, stands,
Alone amid the desert sands,
Who ruled, a queen, o'er antique lands.

He finds no rest where wearily
He ploughs, unknown, the weltering sea
That moans in lone immensity,

Nor where, through waxing, waning moons,
The billows chaunt their mystic runes
Along the wide and windy dunes.

He treads the barren desert drear,
Where pyramids their shadows rear
O'er kings, through fear who ruled, in fear,

While stars, deep in the solemn night,
A glorious company of light,
Gaze silent on his evil plight.

He pierces far, with venturous prore,
Through boreal regions, white and frore,
'Mid whirling snows and wintry blore.

And longing aye his soul to steep
In soothing slumber, sweet and deep,—
A dreamless, everlasting sleep,—

Still his inexpiable crime
Shall goad him on from clime to clime,
Throughout the flight of coming time.

And evermore, from waste to waste,
A spectral shadow, dimly traced,
He flees afar, as one in haste.

THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER.

“ He is young in years, but old in misery.”

THEODORE PARKER.

Wandering heedlessly along,
Through the city's mighty throng,
Deafened by the murmur loud
Of the ever-changing crowd,
Stunned by all the tumult wild,
Goeth he, the outcast child.
By the vast and gilded dome,
By the lordling's palace-home,
By the high and gorgeous fane,
With its brightly-coloured pane,
And tall spire of pride that tell
And richly-fretted pinnacle,—
Then within the chimney dark,
In the winter's cold and stark,
Shameless and unpitying thrust,
Stifled by the soot and dust,—
By the wretched hovel then
Following in the haunts of men ;
Crying with the bitter cold
In his rags and want untold,
Want untold, because no ear
Would his tale of sorrow hear,
Of his spirit's wretched lot,
Bruised and darkened knowing not ;
Tears but for the body's pain
Trickling down his cheeks in vain,
Naught his sufferings to assuage,
Always of our Pariah-age,

Whether in life's wild turmoil,
Or sighing at his weary toil,
Or slumbering in his hovel rent,
Type extreme—embodiment.

Little sufferer, sad and lone,
To the rich thy woes unknown,
Or if known, unheeded still,
'Mid thy heavy load of ill,
By the happy pitied never,
By the heartless taunted ever,
Insulted in thy great distress,
And scorned in very desolateness,
Oh ! shall not they who turn from thee
In thy extremest misery,
On thee, poor soul, for having trod,
Give answer to offended God !

Yes, in thy low and sad estate,
Reviled and deeply desolate,
He who in sorrow grand and deep
Ne'er smiled, but oft was seen to weep,
And bowed with bitter anguish when
Among the suffering sons of men,
In hour of trial great denied,
Hunted, betrayed, and crucified,
Amid earth's sad and injured sons,
Shall count thee with his little ones,
And thy spirit's stains forgot,
And thy crimes remembered not,
And pitying thy strange misery,
Shall, through death's awful mystery,
Unto the Father welcome thee.

THE TOILER.

Before the morning's wakening ray,
 The aged toiler had begun
His task, nor trod the homeward way
 Till day was done,

Thankful that, with the toiler's right,
 He still could eat his honest bread,—
On his own pillow, at the night,
 Could lay his head.

The vain, the heartless, and the vile
 In splendour daily passed him by ;
He saw with neither envious smile
 Nor bitter sigh.

Sometimes, perchance, a passing thought
 He gave his hard and weary lot,
Yet still with steady hand he wrought,
 And murmured not.

Still the returning evening's close
 Brought, with its shadows, nightly rest—
For his worn frame a deep repose,—
 Peace for his breast.

Awaiting thus the longer night,
 That soon should bring the great release,
Thus patiently each task aright
 He wrought in peace.

And when, with weary heart, and head,
 And hand, he could no longer moil,
 He laid him down upon his bed
 And ceased from toil.

His aged frame, quite overworn,
 At last, in slumber sweet and deep,
 Was silent through the lich-gate born
 To endless sleep.

DANTE ⁹

Ahi quanto mi pareo pien di disdegno !

L'INFERNO.

Sad Bard ! while thus I gaze in silence now,
 And thoughts of destiny within me rise,
 On the calm sorrow of thy mournful eyes,
 And noble grief that lights thy lofty brow,
 I know that of time's solemn ages thou
 Art one of those great central souls likewise,
 Round which the paler orbs, through golden skies,
 Went circling in the radiance wide ;—and how
 They learned thy lofty anthem, grand and deep,
 Who listens to its swelling strain may tell ;—
 Thou with the suffering couldst not choose but weep,
 Having so deeply drank at Sorrow's well,
 Yet look'st as in surprise that will not sleep
 That unto man there is a fate so fell.

It never was for thee to bend thee down
 Before the power and grandeur of the great,
 Spurning the outcast in his low estate,
 To bow before the mitre and the crown.

Far in the dusky past with twilight brown,
I see thee bearing up against thy fate,
Though poor, and exiled, and quite desolate,
Unmoved by courtier's smile or monarch's frown.
Though ours is not that selfish, sinful pride
That spurns our brother ignominiously,
That would the struggles of the poor deride,
Nor can in lowest man the god-like see,
Than triumph by the mean oppressor's side
Much rather would we nobly fail with thee.

And thou hadst mastered well that truth sublime,
A truth which shall throughout all time endure :
The soul through suffering is of sin made pure—
The chastener Anguish ever followeth Crime.
Well didst thou know that in the flight of time
The sinning soul is through repentance sure
Of that forgiveness which shall bring a cure,
Restoring brightness of the early prime.
Thy fame hath spread from pole to farthest pole,
And of the world's great history is a part,
And still shall grow, as on the ages roll,
For that thy tears were ever wont to start
At suffering—thus didst thou stir man's soul
And win the great and sorrowing human heart.

And not the soul alone from sin, through pain,
To peace, must ever find its weary way—
The nations that with Error are astray
Must by this selfsame path return again.
They writhe and wrestle with their fate in vain,
And Truth with high, imperial mien away
Down on their paltry struggles of a day
Looks with the calmness of supreme disdain.

The braggart boast of freedom never yet
Has for a single day availed with her,
Nor those grand souls that, in the ages set,
Have found it joy on her to minister,
Who with their tears have kept her altars wet
Among earth's nations all that ever were.

Great souls are always sorrowful, for how
Can there be man whose heart is not of stone,
Who hears from all earth's climes the mingled moan,
Of those that 'neath the despot lowly bow,
Without the stamp of sadness on his brow,
Nor feels their voiceless anguish all his own,
But leaving them to struggle on alone,
His hand to Freedom has no heart to vow?
Proud Land! slow nearing to thy mighty fall,
Who tramplest on thy poor remorselessly,
Mingling their cup of wormwood and of gall,
Full retribution is in store for thee;—
Thou shalt not only, of the nation's all,
Elude inexorable Destiny!

TO PENNSYLVANIA.

Written on my Return to the Country, after a residence in Europe.

My native land, now in the genial Spring,
While the green buds are bursting on the tree,
Back with the bird that far, on wandering wing
Had gone to distant climes, I come to thee,

And leave the Old World far and dim behind,
Like to some floating vision fading fast,

Where he who seeks for worth shall little find,
Amid the rubbish of the ruined past.

How fair thy fields, spread out all broad and green,—
How pure thy skies are arched above, and blue ;
No fairer and no dearer land, I ween,
The pilgrim finds, the world's wide journey through.

Here how the fresh air fills the lungs with life !
'Tis not the sultry air of those far lands
Wherein low-browed servility is rife
And tyrants o'er the nations join their hands.

Here Freedom smiles on me, and might on all
Whose footsteps touch the soil of this, her home,
The heavy chains fall from the weary thrall,
And all be safe who from oppression come.

Yes ! here were man from his oppressor free,
But for the treachery of those paltry knaves
Who beg the tyrant's leave on bended knee
To hunt his slaves, meanest themselves of slaves,

Who elbowing up their way to name and place,
And ever with the just man's honest scorn,
On wealth and power fawn with a natural grace,
And play the serf as to the manner born,

Who serve their country loudly with the tongue,
That they, in deed, may safely serve her less,
And with their praises by hired menials sung,
Ready to sell her for a pottage-mess,—

A hungry horde, who, having all to gain
And nought to lose, have still the art to keep,

Who struggling for the garbage, might and main,
Are ever in the market, and are cheap.

These are thy statesmen ! these are they who fill
Thy council-halls to thy most burning shame,
And these are they who long shall fill them still
And trample in the dust thine honored name !

Philadelphia, 1854.

QUIA DEFECIMUS IN IRA TUA, ET FURORE
TUO TUBATI SUMUS.

There is a wild and mingled wail
Of winds among the autumnal woods,
Of rains whirled by the shifting gale
And surging of the storm-lashed floods.

And in the midst a wail more deep
Than that of rain, and wind, and surge,—
The wail of those who inly weep,
Whose mourning spirits chaunt the dirge

Of them that from their sleep to rise
Shall not essay forevermore,
Whose blood is shed a sacrifice
On Slavery's altars dark with gore.

Look on this man in slumber deep
Borne to the country-churchyard's calm ;
His brain is soothed to endless sleep,
His heart it hath an endless balm.

He knew the storm that threatened long,
With lowering front, had burst at last ;
He knew the true, and brave, and strong,
Must bare their bosoms to the blast.

That village churchyard still and green
It is his place of resting now ;
Perpetual peace is in his mien,
And peace is on his lip and brow.

And in that cool and quiet bed
Could any slumber be more sweet,
The headstone standing at his head,
The footstone standing at his feet ?

Life's fearful usage, fierce and rough,
Shall never more disturb his breast ;
Six feet of earth are now enough
To yield him everlasting rest.

Another drew his painful breath
On feverish field, by sickly stream,
Languished, bewildered in his death,
And died "perplexed in the extreme,"

Not knowing if the land he loved
To his great Thought was leal and true,
The Thought for which he lived and moved
And drew the daily breath he drew.

One fell 'mid blare of bugles wild,
The booming gun and murderous shell ;
Earth rested on her breast her child
Where mangled in her arms he fell,

Not thinking of the day supreme
For which his boyish hand had wrought,
He died before his morning-dream
Had brightened into perfect thought.

Upon his thick, fair hair the Night
Did nightly weep her heaviest dew,
And on his lids that veiled from light
His eyes of mildest, deepest blue.

There, bleaching in the sun and wind
Long on that battle-field he lay—
The carrion-vulture there could find
And only she, his corse, her prey.

High over that vast, warring host,
Through all its troublous wanderings,
Forever follows, like a ghost,
The ominous shadow of her wings.

Ah ! what a banquet grand we spread
On all these many fields for her,
With one continuous slaughter red,
As man were but her minister.

Proud nation—weep thy bitterest tears,
Yes, rain them on each lowly head
Of these who find their only peers
Among earth's noblest grandest dead ;

And from thy great oppression turn
And know the reason of this stress,
And through thy mighty heart-break learn,
All humbleness and tenderness.

And throw the sackcloth over thee,
And on thy head the ashes strew,
If such great penance needs must be
To star thy brow with splendour new.

THE BRANDED.¹⁰

She bears for aye the ineffaceable brand
To mark her off for everlasting scorn—
The scorn of generations yet unborn—
It is a stain of blood upon her hand.
A crimson stain of blood is on that hand.
The blood of myriads even in life's morn
From the warm day to shadowy Lethe torn—
Her evil fame has spread o'er every land.
She walks in sleep, and ever strives to lave
Away that stain, lest from revealing day,
No deep device, no falsehood bold could save,—
The murder of the night it should betray ;
But the damned spot, the purifying wave
And all the seas can never wash away.

HYMN AT THE GRAVE.

The angel mild who ruleth all,
Came with his cooling draught divine,
And bearing in his hand the pall,
Gave of release the final sign.

O gentle Angel, named of Death,
He whom thy hand hath once caressed
Yields gladly in thine arms his breath—
Thenceforth is numbered with the blest.

To our beloved thou didst say,
“ Behold, I come to bring release,
O sorrowing mortal of a day,
And lead into eternal peace.”

And whether, with thy brother Sleep,
Thou borest then his spirit bland,
In soothing slumber, sweet and deep,
Into a distant native land,

We know not. But his form we now
Lay in its kindred earth to rest,
A changeless calm upon his brow,
And endless peace within his breast.

And farther than the shadowy bourne
No mortal of his fate may tell,—
With them that neither joy nor mourn,
Or in the meads of asphodel.

But yet we deem 'tis well with him,
Or on the fair Elysian plain,
Or, 'mid Lethean shadows dim,
No more, for aye, to wake again.

THE BASTILLE.

Here, in the bygone ages, lowering stood
A dark and gloomy fortress of the Wrong ;
Its walls were thick, its iron bars were strong,
Its history was a tale of tears and blood.
Then rose the people in an angry mood
Against the outrage they had suffered long,—
And chaunting freedom's immemorial song,
Swept it away as with a mighty flood.
There now a column soars to meet the sun,
Crowned with the form of Liberty, that goes
Forth to proclaim the glorious victory won
For all the nations, o'er their deadly foes,
The tyrant and the priest, whose day is done,
With all its outrage and its countless woes.

TO THE HERMIT-THRUSH.

Hermit-thrush ! 'tis sweet to be
Out in the summer-woods with thee—
Far in their depths, so green and still,
That with thy tender music thrill,
Where a golden light through the maple gleams
In many-tinted emerald streams,
And nought is heard but the trembling gush
Of thy greenwood-music, hermit-thrush !

And when the sun his mellowed beams
Pours down on the dim, Autumnal streams,

And the brown leaf, dry and sere,
Eddies down to the hazy mere,
Lying broad and deep and still,
Stillier than the lazy rill,
Whose blue waters quiet seem
Gliding on a long day-dream,
And a low murmur, far and wide,
Tells of the slowly-coming tide,
When, the Indian Summer o'er,
The storms shall sweep with vast uproar,
O'er dripping wood and drenchèd plain,
Wet with the wild and whirling rain,
Still, in suit of hermit-brown,
Thou thy lay art trilling, down
Deep in the blue and quiet dells,
Careless whether the muser tells
Of thy music, or of thee,
Or thy life in the woodland-tree.

Hermit-thrush ! amid the din,
And the mingled crowd their way that win,
Thy very name is as a ban
Of these, and a charmèd talisman,
Bringing visions of the hills,
Bringing plashing of the rills,
And the sunshine's golden flash,
On the waterfall with its ceaseless dash,—
And visions fair of the quiet field,
Where the sick in spirit may be healed,
Where the thistle-finch, with plumes of gold,
Ebon-winged and ebon-polled,
Sitting on the thistle's crown,
Scatters far the silvery down,
Floating in the silent air ;—
And of sunny rambles where

I have found, in crevice lone,
Turned into enduring stone,
Feathery fern or antique shell
That its tale of eld doth tell,
Or the chickweed's tiny flower,—
A snow-star beaming its little hour ;—
And I long again to be away,
Where I might list to thy tender lay,
And forget the moiling crowd,
With its tumult harsh and loud,
And the meaner demagogue still toiling
'Mid the mob with all its moiling,
Where each the paltry guerdon earns,
Leading each and led by turns,
And am soon at home with thee,
Singing deep in thy woodland-tree,
And while these sounds in the distance cease,
Encamp afar on the plains of peace.

TO THE TRAILING ARBUTUS.

The mellow sunshine floweth softly down
Golden and wide over these billowy swells,
And on their bare and quiet woods of brown ;
And over all, and in the distant dells,
The blue haze broods in silence. Wandering here
In the deep stillness of this April day,
Sweet flower, once more
I find the trailing all thy rosy bells
Among the pale-brown leaves of the last year.

Yet once again, now, in this genial time,
I feel the warm air play
Over my brow as it was wont of yore ;—
It lingers for thy gift of fragrance near,
Then glides away,
Seeming a truant of some sunnier clime
That on us wide hath oped its golden door.

Of all thy sisters of the meadows far
Widening out under the vernal sun,
Or in the woods and fields that dwellers are,
There is not one,—
Not e'en the low and downy wind-flower blue,
That overjoys the heart with beauty more,
Or sends a sweeter thrill the spirit through,
Than thou. Thy name doth ever unto me
Bring thoughts of early beauty silently—
Of the sweet springtime when, the winter past,
The flowers unfold at last.

TO THE FLOWERS.

When from its beaker bright,
Deeply into the hollows of the dells,
And on the hills,—a flood of golden light,—
The sunshine richly wells,—

O'er hill and valley wide,
Spread far and faintly in the peaceful beam,
Like spirits dim the dark cloud-shadows glide,
As spectres in a dream.

Then in the fields that roll
Their bosoms broad up in the sunlight warm,
Sweet flowers, ye rise, and by the forest-knoll
And rock with rude, dark form.

The fragile wind-flower hears
The low voice of the sunshine calling her,
And where the rich-brown wood-mould bursts, appears
To her sweet worshipper.

The low arbutus bears
A gift of fragrance in each rosy cup,
And to those greenwood-truants, the soft airs,
Her incense offers up.

And from the rock-cleft rude
Upsprings, with nodding bells, the columbine,—
And round her ever, in the solitude,
The wild bee's winglets shine.

Around ye we may hear
A slumberous summer-murmur faintly swell,
Like that which melteth in the listener's ear,
From winding ocean-shell.

And when the sunlight flows
Through the soft foliage in a gushing stream,
'Mid the broad leaves a golden greenness glows,
With its ethereal beam.

The moss-stars, green and bright,
And tall, rich feathers of the bending fern,
Are round ye, and amid the glowing light,
The silken grass-blades turn.

The leaves, at noonday mild,
 Arise when warm winds come with breathings sweet,
And waltz away, along the wood-paths wild,
 With slowly-tripping feet.

Sweet playmates have ye there
 In your wild greenwood-haunts to visit ye,—
The low-voiced humming-bird and spirit-air,
 And fairy bee.

And who is there may tell .
 The fairies bright may not by moonlight play
Around ye, by the woodland-stream and dell,
 With dreamy-chaunted lay,—

And revel in the sweet,
 Rich scent of blossoms in the moonlight air,
Upon your wealth of dews and honeys, meet,
 For fairy-banquet there?

For is there not, at morn,
 The fairy-ring upon the silent green—
And at the night, faint, harp-like music borne
 From tiny lyres unseen?

Throughout your life-time ye
 Know not of grief nor care—from crime apart;—
And naught ye bear for sinless breeze and bee,
 But sweetness at the heart.

TO THE SWEET-SCENTED LIFE-EVERLASTING.

Life-everlasting, by the fading field
And by the sleeping stream
That lie 'neath veiled sun, or moon's broad shield,
Stilled in a breathless dream,
I find once more thy simple coronal
Of pale, sweet flowers and late,
The milder suns that wait,
Where the brown leaves all slow and silent fall
Down from the smoky woods
That spread o'er hill and dale their solitudes.

All the bright summer-flowers have passed away,
Yet, though the woods are gray,
And pale and paler grow the skies serene,
Thou lingerest still,
And 'mid the latter rains thou still art seen
By field-side sere and rill,
Though heavy bowed down with many tears,
When sad November's wail the woodland hears.

And thou, pale flower, henceforth shalt ever be
Of intellectual beauty type to me—
The beauty of the soul that fadeth not,
For, brighter blooms forgot,
Thy fadeless and perennial flowers
Their fragrance lose not in the gloomy hours
That follow to the funeral of the year,
When all the woods are sere.

Thus, in a calm repose,
Which none but the profound of spirit knows,

With high, undaunted mien,
The soul may smile serene
Above the reach of fate and coward fear.

LINES

Written for the Fly-leaf of Wilson's Ornithology.

Here, through a golden gateway, thou
Shalt enter into a land of sun,
Where, with their songs of the woods and fields,
The wandering minstrels ne'er have done.

And ere the blood-root's snowy buds,
Through the last year's leaves the ground that strew,
Have burst, amid the sunny rain,
Whose gold drops stream through the April blue,

There's a sudden flash of azure wings,
Ere long a vernal warble there—
The bluebird has returned again,
The swallows twitter in the air.

And soon the old, familiar notes
The bobolink of yore hath sung,
Linked like gems in a jewelled chain,
Are heard by the winding Manaiung.

Troubadour of sunniest climes,
Pouring wildly his vernal lay—
But with his rhymes and merry chimes,
He flees away with the green-robed May.

Wherever she holds her Court of Love,
Him with his lute-throat we may find,
And his Provençal roundelay,
Leaving the summer far behind,

Where the dove sits deep in the moveless oak,
And with the heat is panting there,
And the song-sparrow trills his tune
Out in the hot and quivering air ;

While all things else are still as sleep
Around and in the silent sky,
And soft, deep shadows in each tree,
A greenwood-twilight, richly lie ;

Till, a fringe of foam on the emerald waves,
The wind the silvery leaves turns up,
Where the green and fragrant walnuts hang
By the side of the acorn's bossy cup.

The mountain-clouds they lie afar
But vast, in the sunshine's arrowy glint,
A lengthening range in the distance lost,
Stainless and white as the snowy flint ;

Like those grand piles that tower on high
By the far lakes and streams of Berne,
Or over the quiet Bodensee—
Or by the mere of still Lucerne.

And scarce a sign in earth or sky
Marks how the gliding hours may go,
Till the dial-shades of the meadow-trees
Tell that the evening sun is low,

And the wood-thrush chaunts his even-song
In the cloistered forest still and cool,
His speckled breast and the slender spray
Pictured clear in the limpid pool.

Like the spent waves on a silent shore,
The day-beats pulse in the dying year ;
But still the warm sun's fading smile
Lights up the fields and the woodlands sere.

Then overhead, in trembling lines,
The waterfowl his followers steers
To surf-beat southern shores, on wings
Wet with the 'dews of distant meres.

Here, through a golden gateway, thou
Shalt enter this land of song and sun,
Where, with their lays of the woods and fields,
The wandering minstrels have never done.

TO A ROBIN.¹¹

Sunning thyself on the naked spray,
Aloft in the latest evening ray,
Gentle Robin, simply clad
In thy homely suit of hodden gray,
My inmost heart thou makest glad
With thy liquid evening lay.
Like notes of a rural oaten reed,
Or rain-drops into a limpid pool
Falling from some wandering cloud, -
Silver-clear in those waters cool,

Or the tinkling of sweet rills
Deep in the hollows of the hills,
From ledge to ledge as they leap and run,
Forever hidden from the sun,

Thy love-ditty thou chauntest still ;
Warbling, warbling, the evening long,
Ever thy fresh and liquid song,
And singing till thou hast sung thy fill.

When the silken threads of the spider's wheel
Are strung with diamonds all ablaze
With rose and emerald, sapphire and gold,
Out in the morning's arrowy rays,
And the sky is mottled with filmy pearl,
And in still waters the eddies whirl,
Whether thou pourest thy matin note
Under the dawn's pale azure coping,
Or tunest thy rich and reedy throat
At eve, from thy knoll to the westward sloping,
Where far away o'er the meadows fair
A golden dust in the silent air
Shimmers in beams that flood thy nest,
Ruddier showing thy ruddy breast,
For these fields and meadows meet
Thy clear roundelay I deem,
For 'tis wild and pure and sweet—
Unpaid, and free as the breeze and stream ;
And though few may prize thy lay,
None can ever say thee nay.

Thus ever at will, thy *own* fresh song
Thou under the dome of blue art singing,
With echoes that all the summer long,
And through the autumnal hush, are ringing.

Near the sill of thy clay-built cot,
 Warbling to thy brooding mate,
Gentle Robin, there is not
 In the halls of pride and state
Half as happy a heart as thine,
That doth with care nor envy pine.

When to yon brown and billowy swells
And to those purple oaken dells,
The gauzy veil of the hazy mist
Lendeth a tinge of the amethyst,
Far away, over sea and land,
Thou wingest thy way, with a kindred band,
 To some isle in a sunny sea.
Would, when the bud on the maple swells,
And the fountain, freed, from the hill-side wells,
 I once more might welcome thee.

TO THE FRINGED GENTIAN.

With thee, frail azure flower, come dreamily
 The golden fading of the yellow fern,
And the sad notes of birds far through the sky
 That to the sunshine of the line return.

For on these woody swells are shimmering wide
 The slumberous Indian Summer's hazy beams,—
The fallen leaves all slow and silent glide
 Adown the misty, blue autumnal streams.

Among the trembling aspen's amber leaves
 A sobbing spirit dwells with visible sign;
And with perpetual moan the dryad grieves
 In the deep shadows of her mountain-pine.

The bard dwells near to Nature's mighty soul,
And feels the throbbings of her gentle heart ;
And of the thrills that through her pulses roll,
His own deep joys and sorrows are a part.

He knows all changeful forms of outward things
But shadow forth the soul of things unseen,—
That from eternal spiritual beauty springs
The lovely, the majestic and serene.

Therefore he knows thy frail and fringed bell
By the warm breath of brown October bent ;
Of the unfathomed Mystery spiritual
Is but a beautiful embodiment.

Thus, pensive quietist, he whiles away
By hill or dell some warm and sunny hour,
'Mid genii strange that with the zephyr play,
Lingering around thy bell, late autumn flower.

THE KATYDIDS.

In your silken robes of the sylvan green
Ye awake once more in this woodland scene ;
And in quiet amusement I listen again
While ye roundly assert and deny amain.

'Mid the leaves invisible myriads hid
And forever proclaiming that Katy did,
Yet others with ceaseless clamour, of her
That Katy didn't, as stoutly aver.

In your shadowy haunts of the whispering pine
And the leafy festoons of the wandering vine,
With the coming of night ye forever begin
Your olden pother and endless din.

But ye give me no clue though ye never are mute
To the cause of your noisy and senseless dispute ;
And I cannot divine why ye cannot agree
In your summer-haunts of the greenwood-tree.

But tell me, I pray you, and tell me true,
What Katy did, or was wont to do ?
Was the deed she wrought to your sylvan throng
One not to be uttered of fearful wrong ?

Tell me, I pray you, was Katy queen
Of all your tribes in the sylvan green—
To the trusting hosts of your Commonweal,
Was she secretly faithless, or was she leal ?

Did she seek the hosts of your forest realm
In frightful ruin forever to whelm ?
Say, was it a deed of deadly fate
That Katy wrought to your sylvan State ?

Or was she rather a doer of good
To her people whose haunt is the summer-wood ?
And are there enviers also among
The countless hosts of your forest-throng ?

I ask, but always I ask in vain—
Ye merely assert and deny again ;
And greatly I fear that forever 'tis hid
What Katy didn't or what she did.

JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT.¹²

Jack loquitur in lingua valde antiqua, hic quasi interpretata.

TEXT :

And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

My text I take from the Druid old
Whose words are better than silver or gold,
Whose genius peopled the ranges free,
Under the shade of the woodland-tree,
With lovely ladies and exiled men,
In the widespread forest of far Ardennes.

Under my tent of this greenwood-beech,
To the simple sylvan people I preach,
And long my sermons have said or sung
In the mystic tones of an antique tongue
The woodman, only, can rede or speak,—
A language older than Hebrew or Greek.

Mysterious voices I hear from the green
And moss-grown boughs of ancient treen,
Where for the vanished a dryad moans ;
And I find a theme in the runic stones,
And sweeter hymns in the greenwood-brooks
Than any found in the printed books.

In his hidden nook sits the quiet hare,
With all at peace, at his humble fare,

Like the innocent king so sorely shent,
And the crown that he wears is called Content ;
The simple preacher, oh do not scorn,
Though humble he be, in the forest born.

The squirrel spreads, on his mossy board,
A picnic feast of his plenteous hoard,
While the wood-thrush pours, through the forest mute,
A solo sweet on his greenwood-flute,
Then feeds on a banquet, simple indeed,
He finds in the thicket of lichen and seed.

Down the rock comes the walking fern,
There stands in the pool the listening hern,
And even the gaudy butterfly
Pauses awhile as she flaunteth by,
And a lesson to all unconsciously gives,
Through the useless and frivolous life she lives.

At evening, down from the darkling hill,
With spectral voice, comes the whippoorwill,
And there, in her robe of pearly white,
The ghost-flower stands at the dead of night,
While the beetle in black, with his firefly-torch
Pauses in front of my sylvan Porch,
And gazes awhile, with a stolid stare,
An empty gaze in the empty air ;
But little, I fear, he seizes aright
Of the thought I utter, the simple wight.

And the burden this of the sermon I preach,
That each should give of his gift to each,—
The dewberry offer her sweetest fruit,
The thrush a tune on his forest-flute,
The chestnut the nuts from her burs that burst,
The brook a draught for the summer thirst,

The wilding her beauty and fragrance give
To all in these shadowy haunts that live.

From my pulpit, in bronze and green arrayed,
'Tis thus I preach in the forest-shade,
And he who comes to this temple grand,
Older than any that man hath planned,
By a magic spirit forever renewed,
For the tribes whose haunt is the solemn wood,
And lists with obedient mind and heart,
To the faithful lessons I here impart,
Returns to the feverish cities of men
With soul refreshed for his work agen.

THE WATERFALLS.¹³

Cold and clear from the mountain-wells,
Mirroring brightly the green arcades,
Shattered to foam in the mossy dells,
Then gliding again through the silent shades,
The immemorial mountain-stream
With murmur sweet to its kindred calls,
And hastes to the river with distant gleam
And fills the forest with waterfalls.

Unconscious nature, with voice subdued,
Soothes the soul with its various tones—
The muffled roar of the wintry wood,
Or the sigh of the pines where the south wind moans,
Or here, where the spray of the foam-cascade
Keeps green forever the moss-robed walls
Whose ferns and vines are an emerald braid,
Amid the murmur of waterfalls.

The merchant, deaf with the city's roar,
And weary of counting his dollars and worn,
The student, wont o'er his books to pore
And the wounded in spirit that silent mourn,
May fill at fountains of freshness here,
A cup with a draught that never palls,
And the soul with beauty, for far and near,
The woods resound with the waterfalls.

Raymond's Kill, Pennsylvania, September, 1887.

SONG.

In Daleton Woods, in summer-time,
The fleeting hours of golden day
With warbled song, and luter's chime,
And antique legend passed away.

From greenwood-wells the naiad poured
For us the cooling, limpid draught;
And olden wine the bard had stored,
We from his crystal goblet quaffed.

Far from the noisy, troubled mart,
We drank life's cup with eager zest,
And welcomed still, with joyous heart,
The passing hour that was our guest.

Oft, 'mid life's daily duties stern,
Through sudden gleams of higher moods,
The truant memory will return
To those swift days in Daleton Woods.

REGRET.

O, golden days of vanished years,
That oft in sudden glory throng,
And passing, fill my charmed ears
With choral and entrancing song,
In beauty and in grace arrayed,
Ye part as if reluctant yet,
And leave behind you, as ye fade
A bitter, since a vain regret.

For Envy, Malice and Intrigue,
I daily meet them, face to face ;
These fateful Three, in hateful league,
Have won me gold and gained me place.
Companions mine, from day to day,
The many, with applauding hands,
And clamorous tongues, and likewise they
Unstable as the treacherous sands.

And on the far and beauteous plains
Through which my journey should have been,
Where Peace with Quiet ever reigns,
Whose fields I ne'er shall enter in,
I see the face of Friendship grand,
But turned in sadness stern away—
A face so beautiful and bland
My heart is wrung with grief to-day.

Ambition, with his trumpet-call,
Lured to his craggy heights and cold,
Nor travail, nor the sudden fall,
Warned from the fate so often told.

To gain those glittering heights that gleamed,
In distant glory brightly then
I toiled, nor found them as they seemed,
But haunts of mean and dwarfish men.

And of the friends of early days,
One whom infinity scarce bars,
Who measures 'mid the ethereal blaze,
The heavenly paths, is crowned with stars ;
And one who holds the world's great heart
Entrancèd while inspired he sings,
Has deathless beauty for his part,
And sweeps a lyre with golden strings.

And one unrolls the changeful page
Of story. With a master-hand,
He limns the wild and pitiless rage
Of power and greed,—a spirit bland ;
While 'mid idyllic fruits and sheaves,
Another makes his home in peace ;
The swallow, 'neath his cottage-eaves
Has scarce from care more full release.

And one has passed these earthly bounds ;
The sorrow in my heart for him,
Is of the requiem that resounds
Through some cathedral vast and dim.
But I, with soul unbeautified,
Have won me only place and gold,
And find these heights outspreading wide,
But glittering. barren, bleak and cold.

O, golden days of vanished years
That never now return again,
Not even for these bitter tears
O'er your lost beauty, shed in vain,—

O'er your lost beauty, shed in vain,
I pour these hot and bitter tears,
Though now ye ne'er return again,
O, golden days of vanished years !

THE GOLDEN SHILLING.¹⁴

Through London streets the Italian noble borne,
Amid the throng in silence gathered there,
With his sad fellow-exiles so to share
That pity—all upon one altar sworn—
A maiden of the people, lowly born
And poor, but with a noble spirit fair,
Trode to his side, and with a queenly air,
Offered her shilling with a hand toil-worn.
He took the humble gift with princely grace
The lowly maiden never could forget,—
The glow of gratitude upon his face,
That with the warm and sudden tears was wet,—
That shilling turned to gold for aye to place
Upon his heart, a priceless amulet.

TO SHAKSPEARE¹⁵

How beautiful, an undisputed king,
Among unnumbered princes standest thou,
Immortal thought upon that perfect brow,
Whereof those lips of marble seem to sing.
Likewise, the matchless hand seems wandering

Over a lyre so many-voiced, that now,
As ever, wins the willing soul to bow,
While golden string mingles with golden string.
Even this solemn Temple fades away
From the tranced senses, and the dying toll
Of bells that tell the flight of time, and say
How brief our life, and the great organ's roll
Through these dim aisles, now, at the passing day,
Before the words upon thy magic scroll!

Westminster Abbey, June, 1880.

APRIL.

I feel the spring in every thrilling vein,
As if with nature's vernal mood at one;
Sweet trembling through the drops of April rain,
Shimmers the golden sun,
And far o'er hill of blue and hazy plain
Pours its warm tide again.

The bluebird's tender warble now once more
I hear—his wings have April's azure hue;
The waters crinkle on the sanded shore
And a forefeeling pulses nature through:
The spring is here—the sunless winter o'er—
The winter o'er and gone with all its pain.

How softly falls once more the wakening ray
Upon the woods of gray,
And heralds unto them the opening year,
And also to the woods and meadows sere,
Saying, in tones subdued, these words of cheer:
“The sullen winter has fled quite away.”

There is an under-meaning runs through all
The works of God. The mild and mellow sun
Melts into golden rain the cloudy pall,
And bids the frozen streams again to run ;
And from the soul the shadows dark shall fall
And on it shine supreme the glorious day !

REQUIEM.

Written on the death of a young Philadelphian, mortally wounded in a great
battle during the Civil War.

A single cannon's thunder deep,
Pulsing through all the sultry air,
Awoke a nation from its dream ;—
There answered soon the bugle's blare.

That bugle-blast that summoned thee,
To myriads more its warning sent,
Who from the banquet-board of life
To fields of fate undaunted went,

And on the altar of a vile
Ambition, mangled, bleeding, fell,
With neither covering, turf nor tear,
Nor requiem of the passing bell.

Ambition thrice-accursed ! Now
The deep and everlasting brand
Henceforth it bears—forevermore
A shame before the world shall stand.

And thus thy kindly poet's heart
Was hurried on through strife and blood—
That heart whose home was with the loved,
By quiet field, and stream and wood,

The sudden bugle's startling blast
Shall ne'er disturb thy rest again ;
And the reveille of the morn
Henceforth shall summon thee in vain.

'Tis sweet to know that gentle hands
For thee the dying pillow smoothed,
And tender words, from kindly hearts
Thy parting spirit sweetly soothed.

But yet I cannot choose but mourn
I was not with thee at the end,
To hear thy last farewell to me,
Thine early-chosen, trusted friend ;

And grieve I was not by thy side
With tender hand thine eyes to close,
And with the final kiss of peace,
To lay thee down in sweet repose.

THE END.

NOTES TO THE IDYLLS.

Note 1.

An impartial observer would doubtless expect that in a country boasting of its democratical institutions, aristocratical pretensions would be regarded with indifference or contempt. Precisely the opposite of this is the fact. The Southern slaveholders ostentatiously boasted of their cavalier ancestry, and as openly and insolently taunted the masses of the North with their plebeian origin. But the celebrated Captain John Smith, who was a contemporary of the first settlers of Virginia, has recorded the fact that they were principally gentlemen's footmen and transported convicts, with a few cast-off sons of aristocratic English families, who had shifted them off to the Colonies to get rid of them. The descendants of these settlers ruled the North with a rod of iron and failed but little of strangling the liberty they had so boldly throttled.

Note 2.

It has been said that the Romish Church is comparatively indifferent to the form of government of a country she has invaded, and with Protean facility accommodates herself alike to despotism and democracy. This is strictly true, but it is true of those despotisms only where she can make a tool of the despot, and of those democracies only where the masses are too ignorant or debauched to withstand her intrigues. Here she played a double game with consummate skill. She allied herself closely with the slaveholders, with whom, through her despotic constitution, she naturally sympathized, (so far as her demand of undivided submission allowed,) but at the same time kept a firm hold of the brutal Northern hordes. She was the strong connecting link that held the extremes together, and through these apparently antagonistic classes she intended to subjugate the intellect and conscience of the nation.

Note 3.

Never in the history of the world has the necessity of a real education—of character—among the masses, been more evident than in the deadly contest with the slaveholders and their allies, the Northern democrats. Until the outbreak of our civil war, the Northern democratical demagogues held the ignorant mob constantly on the side of the slave-drivers; and by exciting envy of the liberal men of the country, and jealousy of the negroes, secured their support of the very men who os-

tentatiously taunted them with their ignoble birth. Both the democratical leaders and the herd they led, bowed as low as anything human could bow. To the democratical party, more than to any other cause, is owing whatever of brutality and violence exists in the national character, of which assertion an examination of democratical newspapers and public speeches printed during the anti-slavery struggle would furnish convincing proof. That party appealed, uniformly, to the basest passions, envy, jealousy and the rest of the baleful tribe; to a noble or generous motive they were never known to appeal. The very forms of constitutional government have been overthrown in the South, through violence and fraud; and it has been shown that the nation is unable to protect its loyal citizens in the exercise of the ballot, which is the very essence of republicanism. This disgraceful fact was proven anew in the presidential contest just concluded. The two candidates pronounced successful have no more been elected than were the candidates of the Southern rebels in 1876, who impudently persist in declaring that they were honestly chosen, cipher dispatches, fraudulent election returns and assassinations to the contrary notwithstanding.

Note 4.

The following is the passage from Bede, of which a paraphrase is given in the idyll:

“*Thisum vordum ðther thās cyninges vita and ealdormann gethāfunge sealde and tō thære spræce fēng and thus cvāth: ‘Thyslic me is geseven, cyning leōfōsta, this andvearde lif manna on eorþan tō vithmetenisse thære tide, the ūs uncūth is, svā gelic svā thu āt svæsendum sitte mid thinum ealdormannum and thegnum on vintertide, and sī fyr onāled, and thin heall gevyrmēd, and hit rine and snive and hāgele and styrme ūte; cume thonne ān spearva and hrāthlice thāt hūs thurhflēo, thurh ðthre duru in, thurh ðthre ūt gevite: hvāt he on thā tid, thā he inne byth, ne byth rined mid thy storme thās vintres! ac thāt byth ān eāgan bryhtm and thāt lāste fāc, and he sōna of vintra in vinter eft cymeth. Svā thonne this monna lif tō medmyclum fāce ātyveth; hvāt thær foregēnge, oththe hvāt thær āfterfylige, ve ne cunnan.’*”

NOTES TO THE MINOR POEMS.

Note 1.

The principal facts, on which this ballad is founded, are drawn from Penn's "Travels in Holland and Germany." Pennsylvania was the first of the Colonies in every early movement for the overthrow of slavery. The Germans uttered the first religious testimony against it in 1688. Ralph Sandiford set the first example of voluntary emancipation, in 1733, and Pennsylvania preceded even Massachusetts in the legal abolition of the institution, by half a year, though she had a much greater interest at stake.

Note 2.

The reader who is familiar with the disgraceful history recorded in this ballad, will perceive that I have taken a few liberties with it as to time and place; but, in the main, I have adhered to what is written.

Note 3.

This is the Indian name of Lake George, and is said to signify "Clear Water."

Note 4.

On a lofty knoll, just below Bornhofen, on the right shore of the Rhine, stand the ruins of two mediæval castles, called "The Brothers," which form the scene of the legend embodied in this ballad.

Note 5.

Lissau was a village on the Elbe. The events narrated in the poem occurred among the frightful persecutions instigated and conducted by the Jesuits, during the Thirty Years' War.

Note 7.

In the Chapel of Michael Angelo, in the ancient Cathedral of San Lorenzo, at Florence, there are two marble groups by the great sculptor, the one representing Day and Night, the other Dawn and the Evening Twilight. On brackets above are two sitting figures, representing princes of the Medici family, one of which, Lorenzo d'Urbino, is helmeted, and in an attitude as of gloomy contemplation of the deeds he had done;

while a third bracket supports a group representing Mary and the infant Jesus, the whole by the same great master.

A Florentine prince, Alfonso Strozzi, laid the following quatrain at the base of the statue of the Night :

La notte che tu vedi in sì dolci atti
 Dormire, fu da un Angelo scolpita
 In questo sasso, e perchè dorme ha vita ;
 Destala, se nol credi, e parleratti.

The great sculptor, in reply, placed these mysterious lines on its lips, having, according to Niccolini, accomplished "in quel marmo, la sua vendetta immortale :"

Giovami il sonno, e più l'esser di sasso,
 Mentre che il danno, e la vergogna dura ;
 Non udir, non veder mi è gran ventura :
 Però non mi svegliar, deh ! parla basso.

Note 8.

An ancient Egyptian statue of Isis, or Neith, bore the following sublime inscription : "I am that which is. I am all that was, all that is, and all that shall be. No mortal man hath my veil uplifted."

Note 9.

These sonnets were written under a copy of the famous Lost Portrait of Dante, painted in fresco by Giotto, on a wall of the Chapel of the Podestà, in Florence, and which, having been ignorantly covered with a coat of whitewash, was, many years ago, discovered and restored through the efforts of an Englishman resident in that city.

Note 10.

Without satisfactory assurances from the leaders of the Democratical party in the North that all the aid in their power would be given to the South in her rebellion in behalf of slavery, openly where they durst, secretly where they durst not, the Southern conspirators would never have undertaken the revolt. They knew perfectly well that with a united North and with half their own population thoroughly disaffected, they must fail ignominiously. A persistent effort has been made to conceal these facts, and to exonerate the Northern Democrats from this charge, to whitewash the characters of certain conspicuous Democrats, both civil and military ; but every one knows that when whitewash begins to peel off, (which it will invariably do in the end,) the whitewashed object

looks even more shabby than before. And even now, after the rebellion had seemed a failure, there have arisen again, all over the North, apologetic accomplices quite ready to forgive the continued Southern outrages against others, and who have gained some reputation for amiability, and even for broad statesmanship, by the denial and suppression of the facts of the case—the falsification of history. Suppression has attained quite to the rank of a fine art.

NOTE 11.

This is the *Turdus migratorius* of the ornithologists. It does not belong to the same genus as the English robin, the bird of that familiar nursery fable, the “Babes in the Woods,” but is, as the Latin name indicates, a genuine thrush.

NOTE 12.

This is the common name, in Pennsylvania, of the *Arisæma triphyllum*. The plant to which I have given the name of “ghost-flower,” is the *Monotropa uniflora*.

NOTE 13.

Over a mountain-range in Northeastern Pennsylvania, bordering on the Delaware for many miles, the streams, with short distances between them, pour down through the rocky forest-glens, forming innumerable cascades, any one of which would make the fortune of a county in the less picturesque parts of the State.

NOTE 14.

The “Italian noble” was Baron Poerio, who, together with his companions, was received, on his passage through London, with a spontaneous ovation by all classes, in testimony of their indignation at the outrages and cruelties which had been inflicted upon them in the state prisons by the infamous King “Bomba” of Naples. The name of the “maiden of the people” was never discovered.

NOTE 15.

A beautiful statue of Shakspeare by Kent, stands in the Poet’s Corner of Westminster Abbey, bearing a scroll with the famous words from *The Tempest*, alluded to in the sonnet.

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